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Troubles Online

Ableism and Access in Higher Education

Edited by Chelsea Temple Jones,
Fady Shanouda, and Lisanne Binhammer

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To all the disabled, crip, mad, queer, sick, racialized, and precarious pedagogues doing the work. Thank you.

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Troubles Online

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Foreword

Jay Dolmage

As Collins, Smith, and Jeffery (Chapter 4 this volume) put it so succinctly, "amid a pandemic, universities sought financial survival by quickly moving almost all curriculum and services for students to emergency remote digital platforms," but this pivot has been seen as "a temporary solution during the crisis for classes that are designed for and intended to be delivered in the face-to-face classroom." In disability studies, borrowing from the disability rights movement, we readily recognize such temporary, forced solutions, especially in higher education, and we call them *retrofits*.

To retrofit is to add a component or accessory to something that has been manufactured or built already. Often the retrofit allows a product to measure up to new regulations, and often it is forced or mandated. Thus, as a building is retrofitted to accommodate disability, a ramp is added to the side of the building, or around the back, instead of at the main entrance. Such retrofits often locate disability as supplemental to society, as an afterthought or imposition.

We are all becoming much more aware of retrofitting in the COVID-19 era. Our restaurants and businesses have Plexiglas walls built, and tables and chairs are now a measured distance apart. There are new laws and regulations designed both to make spaces safer and to allow them to remain open. Perhaps rightly so, these retrofits have been criticized. Some are wise and well thought out, but others seem to be simply performative,

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like a mask over one's mouth but not over one's nose. For students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, retrofits often put us in difficult positions, having to ask over and over again for small adjustments, knowing that they might not help us, that we might be denied our requests, and that we might be stigmatized for asking.

One way to think about how retrofits for disability function in higher education is to look at an image recently posted online by a student named Sarah-Marie Da Silva from the University of Hull. She posted the picture on Twitter, showing how she is forced to take in her zoology lectures. When she arrives at the lecture, there is only one place for her to sit, in the doorway at the back of the room. That doorway has a push-button entrance and an automatic door, allowing her to get into the room. But when she gets in, there is nowhere to go. There are stairs immediately in front of her, and they lead down to an amphitheater in which other students are seated at tables arranged one after the other, descending every three steps. Whenever anyone enters or leaves the room, Sarah-Marie needs to move. This is what so many of not only the physical but also the curricular and cultural layouts within higher education actually look like: disabled students might be able to get into the rooms, but their access is clearly an afterthought, and their participation is already minimized. No wonder we are losing so many disabled students.

Twenty-seven percent of Canadians have university degrees. But only 17.6% of Canadians with "mild or moderate" disabilities have postsecondary degrees (Statistics Canada, 2012). Although recently more students with disabilities are enrolling than in previous eras, "nearly two thirds are unable to complete their degrees within six years" (Smith, 2014). A very modest estimate (based just on students who get accommodations) suggests that 10% of people with disabilities leave postsecondary institutions before obtaining their desired credentials (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2017). I think that it could be much more like 30% if we extrapolate from the number of students with self-declared disabilities who never seek help. In the United States, some studies show that two-thirds of college students "don't receive accommodations simply because their colleges don't know about their disabilities" (Grasgreen,

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Figure 1. *Zoology student Sarah-Marie Da Silva sits at the back of a University of Hull lecture hall, 2020. Source:* Sarah-Marie Da Silva.

2014). Disabled students are also likely to have up to 60% more student debt by the time they graduate (Mohamed, 2014). It is not just that we have inaccessible environments, so many barriers for disabled students, but also that, when we try to create more accessibility, we do so very ineffectively. As so many of the contributors to this volume show, our transition to emergency online education replicates this lack of planning for disabled students.

Even before all of us were forced to make a pandemic transition online, we knew that more and more students were taking online courses for credit (Donovan et al., 2019; Ostrowski et al., 2017). Nearly all postsecondary institutions were offering fully online courses, and in Canada in 2019 one in five students took at least one online course (Donovan et al., 2019). But as McManus et al. warned in 2017, despite the increasing prevalence of students with, for example, mental health–related disabilities in post-secondary online courses and programs, limited research had examined factors affecting learning for this population in the online setting. We

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were already planning an online future that seemingly did not include disabled students.

COVID-19 has magnified aspects of higher education that are not working (Cherry et al., 2021). As a result, I think, we might be paying slightly more attention to some of these barriers faced by students. As a recent *Maclean's* article on students with disabilities and COVID-19 concluded, "barriers have *changed*" (Loeppky, 2020, para. 7). The Toronto Science Policy Network (2020) reported that, according to a survey that it conducted in 2020, "around three-quarters of graduate students reported that Covid-19" and the pivot to online courses and research settings "negatively impacted their ability to conduct research," and "graduate students increasingly reported experiencing anxiety, depression, feelings of helplessness, loneliness, or being overwhelmed compared to before the pandemic. Seventy-two percent indicated that these feelings increased as a result of Covid-19. Twenty-six percent of respondents are now considering taking a long term leave of absence" (p. 5). According to the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations (2020), since COVID-19, "among faculty, a full four in five agree that the university's pandemic response has had a 'negative impact on my teaching ability or ability to convey important learning material to students,'" (p. 13) and faculty report significant negative impacts on their own mental well-being. Moving online, we see a different relationship between disability and teaching, one in which I hope we can better understand the disabling impact of education. But none of this should come as a surprise: we should have seen the possible disabling impacts of a shift online, just as we should have been planning for the presence of disability.

Unfortunately, though we acknowledge that our students come from different places, and that they are headed in different directions, this does little to alter the vectors of our own pedagogy. Most often the only time that disability is spoken or written about in class is in the final line of the syllabus, when students are referred to the Office of Disability Services should they desire assistance. The message to students is that disability is a supplementary concern, not the teachers' concern, not really a part of the course; rather, it is at the back door of the syllabus. The nature of the "retrofitted" accommodation requires that we make no lasting changes

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to our pedagogy or to the culture of the university. Many times retrofits are rhetorically and concretely constructed in ways that actually enhance and *rationalize* exclusion; they perpetuate an ideology that appears to be neutral or objectively true (Friesen, 2012).

Retrofitted accommodations, as shown with the example of Sarah-Marie, lead to nowhere. More than three-quarters (76.3%) of the accommodations offered at North American schools are the same: extended time on tests and exams (Furrie, 2017). If, like me, you do not offer tests or exams very often, and never in a timed way, well, then, good. However, if you keep working with Disability Services and it keeps offering this accommodation, then you are short-circuiting the process. We need a much broader repertoire of accommodations. In writing classrooms, like the one in which I work, where I rarely give tests and lectures, I know that I must work to expand the range of accommodations that can be offered to students. Many other teachers argue for innovative teaching methods that move beyond lecturing, testing, and rote learning. But continuing to work within this narrow range of accommodations while advocating for a broader range of literacies and modalities is problematic. The accommodations remain stuck in a Fordist educational regime in which rigidity and uniformity and timing reign supreme and values of independence, self-determination, and economic gain are entrenched. This brings us closer to what we might call malicious compliance, in which following the letter of the accommodation law will hurt the student.

Emergency online education has been no different. For example, we have seen a series of angry responses from students forced to use technology-based proctoring solutions such as Respondus and its "lock-down web browser" to take online exams. Students at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, for example, were told that they needed to buy an external webcam and tripod in spring 2020 despite a global shortage and the rising expense of this technology (Hazlewood, 2020). To set up the camera and use it during an exam required a ridiculous series of instructions and stipulations on camera position, how a student could move, and even how and when a student could go to the washroom. All of this was just so that the instructor could give a test not properly adapted to online learning. This was a move toward governmentality within online

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education, which situates students as potential cheaters rather than potential learners, community members, or co-constructors of knowledge. These technologies and their expense and use are offloaded onto students, a perfect distillation of the ways that we have responded to emergency online education: retaining, maintaining, and adding to the barriers faced by students rather than trying to remove them. As Stommel and Morris suggest in Chapter 3 of this book, we need to invest in faculty and students rather than remote proctoring solutions and plagiarism detection services. Imagine which accommodations might be offered to a student using Respondus at home? The Disability Services office would have to take weeks to figure out a workaround. I argue that our time and energy need to be used much better.

What was once an accommodation or a retrofit has become a decisive way forward through the pandemic. Of course, there is some irony that the ableist demands for physical attendance and participation that teachers used to cling to so tightly have now been so easily left behind online. Asking to have a grade converted to credit/no credit rather than a numerical grade, requesting an extended deadline, getting extra time on a research grant or a tenure deadline—all of a sudden anyone who wanted these things could have them. Disabled people can hardly count the number of times that they were denied these things and stigmatized for even asking about them before the pandemic. Of course, most of the ableist demands of academia likely will slide right back into place, though others might be gone for good. The advocacy of actual disabled people—unfortunately based on the patterns that we have seen—is unlikely to be what determines this future if we do not advocate now. We need to make sure that emergency online education does not become the status quo and that accommodations, from attendance to credit/no credit solutions, remain the norm.

That said, if expanded access is being called for, then let us ride that momentum.

For example, as we were forced to pivot online, we might have learned how to caption videos, or how to provide transcripts, or how to share these things so that students could access them any time. This was an uphill battle, to be sure, but one that can now stand as accessible infrastructure.

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In a study of engineering students with disabilities at the University of Illinois, results from 303 responses from 49 different courses showed that students with disabilities were asking, well before the pandemic, for video-recorded lectures, transcripts of them, and course textbook and instructor notes/slides that they could engage with offline (Amos et al., 2021). Literature on teachers' perspectives during the pandemic has shown the importance of accommodating both asynchronous and synchronous approaches (Cherry et al., 2021; Kovacs et al., 2021). These are all things that we began to offer broadly during the pandemic, that many instructors learned how to do for the first time, and that might now stand as accessible infrastructure in our courses. Let us keep doing this, even when we move back into the physical classroom; let us see these things as the baseline for online access.

That is just a small place to start. But it is a place to start. What did you do in your research environment in order to keep your research program going during the pandemic? Did some of these things increase access more generally? Can you keep doing these things? What have you changed in your teaching online since the pandemic that you could keep doing in order to increase accessibility?

My challenge to you is to think again about the barriers that students might be facing right now and to explore how they get accommodated. As Hamraie (2018) notes, critical access theory can help us to facilitate disability justice better; we need to incorporate critical digital access into how we think about online education. What are the workarounds? How have we built accessibility into our pivot to online learning? How will we need to retrofit our teaching in ways that remove barriers when we finally do return to campus (knowing that some of us already have)? How will they sync with our own access needs, our own safety? I will make some suggestions of my own.

To begin with, as Arzu-Carmichael shows in Chapter 2 of this volume, "the factors that make online education the primary or only choice for many students are important for scholars to understand." Students will continue to need the right to learn online. Likewise, as Arlene Kanter (2022) of Syracuse University recently argued, "while discussions of the future of remote work have been a 'hot topic' during the pandemic, . . .

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given the current realities of the post-pandemic workplace, remote work is a reasonable accommodation for qualified disabled employees," and we will need to lobby for changes and amendments to the current regulations and policies "to re-envision remote work as the future of disability accommodation." Our current workplaces, we need to admit, are much riskier than ever before. This risk disproportionately affects disabled people. We also need to admit that the ways in which universities approach risk have always been highly problematic. Either we actively advocate for our rights now, or we stand back and watch them disappear. We should understand online or remote learning and teaching as a right.

Another example is that, during our forced pivot to teaching online during the pandemic, we came to understand attendance and participation in radically new ways; we were forced to create more expansive ways for students to learn and to show what they learned outside the 50 to 80 minutes that they were in classrooms with us. Let us never assess again their involvement based only on being in the classroom or in 50-minute chunks. In Chapter 8 of this volume, Stevens and McCall suggest that we see students as being involved in "participatory design" in our online classes. Vorstermans and Mohler similarly put forward in Chapter 10 pedagogical suggestions that prioritize active co-creation in the classroom, reminding us that "this co-creation must take into account disproportionate labour for BIPOC and disabled students and faculty and be meaningfully co-created, not downloaded, labour." We cannot count attendance again, and we should begin to see "participation" in a way that shares ownership within our online spaces.

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo, where I teach, was told by the associate dean to pull back on assignments in spring 2020: that is, to assign less. This allowed me and many of my colleagues to teach more, to connect with students more, and to assess less. Why should we ever go back to a system in which instructor labour is devoted too much to grading students and too little to communicating with them or sharing authority and space with student voices? As Reid and Shanouda argue in Chapter 1, "decentring the expert is not just good teaching practice, or a clever way to manage or eliminate overwork for the instructor, for it creates a more caring and just teaching and learning space by acknowledging

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everyone's possible contributions." As they show, if we assign less and assess less, then we can make space to share access work in the classroom, to facilitate difficult conversations, and to recognize and respect student resistance; we can avoid steamrolling through content, and we can open up space for reflection and genuine learning.

In winter 2020, despite their centrality to educational culture, we were asked to find alternatives to timed, in-person tests and exams. Well, they were never good ways to assess student learning (Cherry et al., 2021), and despite the lore that supports their continued use there is no research that shows that students learn more, retain more information, study more effectively, or even properly reveal what they have learned when a test or exam is timed. Still, we spend almost all of our accommodation budget and time on granting extended time on these ineffective instruments. That is absurd.

Testing in higher education is a significant creator of barriers, in particular for people with learning disabilities and mental health–related disabilities. And it does not make sense to think that these students will experience anything like these barriers in the environment outside school, where high-stakes testing is extremely rare. There will be other barriers for our students when they reach the world of work but nothing like the barrier imposed by a timed test. Likewise, the accommodations that these students will need in a professional capacity are unlikely to look anything like the accommodations that they get in test-heavy classrooms. That is not only a huge problem but also a huge wasted opportunity. We halted timed exams once. Let us push to eradicate them as much as we can from online teaching.

We know that there are accommodations that can really help students, including help with note taking and record keeping and technological solutions for communication and memory issues. Online, some of these provisions are easier to create for students. But solving the problems of higher education—whether in-person or online—cannot be done by tools alone. We need to be techno-critical; as Friesen captured back in 2012, the idea that technological progress alone drives educational change is a myth. Instead, we need to plan for and with disabled students. But I also want to suggest that, if we plan for more disabled students in our classrooms,

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both online and in-person, then we could really change the shape of higher education. This is an innocuous but a revolutionary question: what if we allocated all of the energy that we spend on adapting to an old educational regime based on timing and testing to building a new one in which disabled students do not always need to ask for accommodations since their needs are expected and centred?

I think that we all agree that before this pandemic our schools had too many unnecessary barriers in place for both students and faculty. COVID-19 has provided new reference points for evaluating long-standing social problems; we can see old issues from new perspectives (Sherwood et al., 2021). If we want to avoid constructing our current push toward online education as just another temporary retrofit, then we need to build something much more accessible, much more sustainable, and this collection offers a series of excellent, provocative, practical places to begin.

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Introducing *Troubles Online*

Chelsea Temple Jones and Fady Shanouda

The purpose of this book is to *trouble* the illusion that online pedagogy is exempt from academic ableism (Dolmage, 2017). On the contrary, academic ableism thrives in online teaching and learning, and as new advances emerge we are witnesses to ever more uncritical additions that abject bodymind difference. Beginning from a critical vantage point that aims to politicize online teaching and learning, this collection necessarily faces a few directions at once. At first, the book began to take shape before a pandemic threw us into emergency remote teaching, but now it exists beneath mounting pressure to embrace a (post-)pandemic "new normal" that repeats ableism in its rejection of the crisis conditions that forced us online. All the while, crip creatives direct the evolving visions of what it means to make the world accessible in times of crisis. As we encounter these overlapping and sometimes contradicting realities, we know that embodied difference is often realized through a series of complications routinely overlooked in literature on critical digital pedagogy, which, even for its fringy liberation-focused agenda, relegates disabled, d/Deaf, neurodivergent, and mad students as afterthoughts. This means that critical access, too, is regularly sidelined. Meanwhile, institutions profit from branding their online initiatives as neutral and inherently accessible, even when they

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are neither (Price, 2011). For these reasons, this book is a response to the fallacy that online learning is accessible. The book is a reminder that pitfalls of online learning and their accompanying critiques had ignited before COVID-19 irrevocably changed our experiences of teaching and learning online. Finally, *Troubles Online* complexifies the evolution of online teaching in recent years and politicizes the access-heavy work of online teaching and learning, which we call accessible critical digital pedagogy.

Starting with Seven Troubles

The idea for this collection came from a shared frustration with what we view as the troubles of teaching and learning online. We come to this collection from the fields of critical disability studies, mad studies, and critical digital pedagogy—all intersectional realms that challenge the status quo of technology, access, and how non-normative bodyminds exist in academia (Clare, 2017; Price, 2011). When this project began, we were two of many precariously positioned pedagogues obligated to teach and learn online in a 2010s ethos of rapid digital expansion at the whims of our respective institutions' austere ambitions. Year after year, and semester after semester, we witnessed academic ableism online but little concern from our respective institutions about the complexly embodied experiences of those of us teaching and learning online. Concurrently, online teaching and learning were pushed forward in the name of access even as it reproduced long-standing experiences of ableism and its intersections: racism, sexism, sanism, colonialism, and other oppressive "isms" that seemed to be (falsely) neutralized by modes of digital pedagogy. Our career trajectories unfolded under an ambiguous, buzzword-laden banner of "diversity" (Ahmed, 2012) that, even today, often encompasses online pedagogy, suggesting that digital teaching and learning can work for everyone. Our experiences suggest the opposite: online learning is not inherently more accessible than other forms of pedagogy, and it discriminates. This realization is among the first of seven distinct troubles that we developed in collaboration with the co-authors

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of this collection to describe the ableist underpinning of online teaching and learning:

(1) illusions of online pedagogy as a solution to the problem of inaccessible higher education;
(2) misperceptions that digital classrooms are universally accessible and available to all;
(3) failures of new modes of digital praxis being attributed to individual users;
(4) pandemic-related shifts in online teaching and learning that put this praxis in crisis with an unreasonable expectation of recovery;
(5) the unresolvable nature of the complexities of online teaching and learning;
(6) the fallacious presentation of online teaching and learning as apolitical and ahistorical, resulting in the erasure of crip, neurodiverse, and other digital creators' world making; and
(7) the invitation to cause troubles online through active resistance to and reimaginings of our digital futures.

In a bid to "stay with the trouble" so that we can move from critique to resistance, as per Donna Haraway's (2016) feminist post-humanist directive, we spent four years developing this collection before and during COVID-19. The pandemic brought with it a spat of delays and rapid changes to online teaching and learning that triggered many starts and stops in the editorial process. Our additional editor, Lisanne Binhammer, came on board in response to the fitful nature of the project and to provide the perspective of a digital product designer and recent graduate of a pandemic-induced, fully remote master's program. The 18 chapter authors' long and patient engagement with this project has resulted in new visions of accessible critical digital pedagogy that resist ableist norms in higher education. We take these troubles both as difficulties that evoke anxiety and unrest about the praxis of online teaching and learning and as invitational turbulence, as points of mobilization that might support the work of troublemakers with long traditions of usurping, resisting, and world

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making in ways that support the critical praxis of digital teaching and learning.

To us, troubling the norms of online teaching and learning is a critical move that can mean thinking broadly about accessibility and digital pedagogy. In this sense, we propose accessible critical digital pedagogy as a way of infusing contemporary thought about pedagogy with concern about, and attention to, access. This approach launches from critical pedagogy, an evolving philosophy and pedagogical movement that underscores the political in education (Freire, 1997; Giroux, 2020; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2020). Following hooks (1994) and Freire (1997), critical *digital* pedagogy is often rooted in hope and promotes a critical awareness of social reality through reflection and action. In taking critical digital pedagogy online with specific attention to the broadness of access and accessibility, we acknowledge that higher education is always already a site of oppression and potential emancipation (Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020). And we layer in a foundational recognition that disabled, mad, d/Deaf, and neurodivergent people have long refined embodied connections in digital spaces as a mode of access creation and innovation (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019). As for hope, this collection is an invitation to reflect on the limits of contemporary pedagogy in a digital world and to witness higher education's ongoing transgressions in moments of significant cultural change, including but not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic. We posit that online learning is not better than in-person learning or vice versa. Both modes are entrenched in ableism. Both modes demand that we not give up. In the stories below, we chronicle our collective entanglements with these and other troubles that informed the scaffolding of this collection, punctuated three times by what Vorstermans and Mohler (Chapter 10 in this collection) call "moments of reckoning" that sparked our pedagogical transformations.

The First "Moment of Reckoning," 2018

It is 2018, and a presenter fumbles over podium gadgets while I, Chelsea, sit in the audience of an international online learning conference. There is no hint that someday soon a pandemic will swiftly push all of the

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pedagogues in this room online and toward an emergency-paced digital pedagogy with no end in sight. These days distance education is still mostly voluntary (Kovacs et al., 2021). Online teaching and learning are something of a novelty at the Toronto-based university where I work. The presenter assures us that we will get started right away. Then a woman's face appears on the large screen. The woman begins talking. The trouble is that nobody can understand what she is saying.

Her voice is a loud, jarring hum of electronic crinkles, like a jammed video call. It is impossible to understand her, not because of her speech with its undulating hints at bodymind difference, but because she is at the epicentre of a technical disaster with no live transcription, sign language interpretation, or closed captioning. The presentation is inaccessible. Yet the presenter quips "What I love about Catherine is that she's a real go-getter!" But what is Catherine saying? This goes on for 10 minutes. Astonishingly, in the end, people clap.

With their applause, Catherine's supercrip status is solidified. Her story, though distorted, is the predictable, tokenistic tale of overcoming barriers to learning through her own perky resilience with a digital learning management system rather than through any university's meaningful commitment to removing barriers to her participation in both virtual and in-person spheres. It is academic ableism in action (Dolmage, 2017). The applause speaks to the room's low expectations of both a disabled learner, Catherine, and the limited promise of online learning. I do not clap.

I later recalled this moment in *University Affairs* (Jones, 2018), arguing that, when a supercrip story becomes the marker of accessible online learning, the bar is set too low. Educators must consider disability and accessibility concomitantly and as more than an add-on to already established pedagogy. Rather, disability is a significant, ongoing part of critical scholarship crucial to any conversation about online and in-person access—and any hybrid modes in between. And, as Jenna Reid and Fady Shanouda point out in their chapter in this volume, "Caring Online: A Justice-Oriented Approach to Online Pedagogy," access is not only about access to information. Access to necessary learning—including learning about difficult content in difficult times—requires

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politically rooted pedagogies of care, love, and justice. As Reid and Shanouda explain,

> A justice-oriented approach . . . requires faculty and sessionals to understand that the decisions they make, the materials they use in class, the assignments they create, and their synchronous versus asynchronous approaches are not apolitical. Regardless of the subject matter or the disciplinary approach, we have to unearth and acknowledge the histories of exclusion in our fields of study so as to communicate this difficult knowledge to our students and to ensure that our field grows in the direction of justice.

Sentiments about retheorizing the classroom according to justice-based online pedagogy emerge repeatedly in this collection, with all authors strategizing on how to plan for and build relational virtual spaces in which an embodied connection is not guaranteed, and perhaps not even likely, despite simplistic supercrip stories of disabled people's place in pedagogical advancement.

Critical Access and Universal Design for Learning

Recalling this moment—when a disabled student was objectified for the institutional advancement of online pedagogy—reminds me that planning pedagogy that considers justice and accessibility in the same breath means paying serious attention to how disciplines invest in access as a critical topic—a prerequisite to this collection. Critical disability studies, deaf studies, and mad studies, for example, trace the eugenic histories of universities, pointing out that disabled people historically were unwelcome in the academy (Dolmage, 2017; Kelly et al., 2021; Shanouda, 2019). They as well as feminists such as Sara Ahmed (2012) teach us to be critical of institutions that lean on jargon such as "inclusion" and "diversity" while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge historical and contemporary failures to make programming accessible, both online and offline. Disabled, d/Deaf, mad, and neurodivergent learners and teachers have spent decades advocating for access, and in some contexts educators have paid attention. For example, such advocacy sparked the creation in Canada of

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a publicly available, accessible class at Humber College, whose creation story is chronicled by Nathan Whitlock and Anne Zbitnew in their chapter, "Making Accessible Media: An Interview." Their plans for developing an online course went beyond the basic retrofit formula of adding captioning, sign language interpretation, and clear language to their pedagogical tools. Instead, the authors ushered in a process of collaborative access that invited difference into the online space at the outset and remained committed to an ongoing engagement with evolving accessibility.

More commonly, though, access is uncritically conflated with universal approaches to classroom building, as in online teaching and learning inherently benefit everyone and are somehow exempt from the institution's ongoing oppressive legacies. In their foundational work establishing critical access studies, Aimi Hamraie (2016, 2017) reminds us that the "benefits everyone" approach is a product of relatively young universal design philosophies transferred from fields of architecture in which a building is seen as accessible if it complies with a list of preset requirements. This checklist approach—which renders disability as depoliticized—has been applied to the digital world via Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Its advocates support a type of accessibility premised on the inclusion of all. To include everyone is to imagine those other than ourselves and plan for their presence. Although this type of planning seems to be a friendly intervention, it carries the colonial objectification of empathetic and inclusive design that leads educators into a process of *othering* students by making assumptions about their lived realities (Mehta & Gleason, 2021). Such simulation exercises cut off opportunities for learners to contribute their own strategies for removing barriers and heightening access (Williams, 2017). And, increasingly, as pandemic reflections fill the growing canon of critical digital pedagogy thought, we observe that, although COVID-19 provides new reference points for evaluating long-standing social problems that affect education (Sherwood et al., 2021), emergency remote education is sometimes touted as "a pathway to a new normal" rather than taken up as a short-term response with potential for meaningful social change (Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021). In this "post- or with-COVID-19" context (Vorstermans & Mohler, this volume), UDL re-emerges as a normalizing framework ("lessons learned")

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as researchers offer new calls for individualized, solution-focused learning (Xiao, 2021) and in so doing identify challenges "experienced by all" (Lelli et al., 2021). This UDL creep is uncritical and dilutes the intricacies and complexities of access that disability scholars have animated in many different forms throughout the 50-year history of the field. This history includes Hamraie's (2020) push for critical access studies, engaging with the political commitments of accessibility from the perspectives of disability justice and disability culture. With this in mind, and following María Migueliz Valcarlos et al.'s (2020) rephrasing of Audre Lorde's (2007) seminal quotation, UDL creep has us asking: can we dismantle the master's house with the master's *repurposed* tools?

UDL creep looks like the omission of the "critical" and the "pedagogy" from the field of critical digital pedagogy—a move against which Sean Michael Morris and Jesse Stommel caution (2018, p. 1). This depoliticization takes many forms: a focus on best practices, a push for universal approaches, ontological leanings toward online pedagogy as inherently constructive, and the chronic upholding of supercrip narratives when disabled people are teaching and learning online. However, as Hannah Stevens and Mary McCall explain in their chapter, "Students as Designers, not Consumers: Framing Accessible, Participatory Learning as a Social Justice Approach to Online Course Design," universal approaches, rooted as they are in disability activism (Hamraie, 2017), are also a useful ramping up toward online teaching and learning informed by the most affected. Universalist approaches have paved the way for user-centred design, which helps us to rethink the roles of teachers and learners, specifically shifting us away from consumer subjectivities by nurturing new understandings of the limits of widely used learning management systems and accessibility checklists. Here online teaching and learning can be oriented toward disabled, mad, d/Deaf, and neurodivergent people's experiences. In this way, we can start to *crip* critical digital pedagogy. A crip approach is highly political and engages with online discoveries that account for a focus on intersectional justice that centres on anti-blackness, anti-Indigenous racism, queering online spaces, and collective resistance. At least two chapters in this collection argue for a crip approach: Kimberlee Collins, Kristin Smith, and Donna Jeffery's "Online Social Work Education

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in Canada: Disappearing Disability in the Academy" and Fiona Cheuk and Esther Ignagni's "Materializing Access in the Dematerialized Space of Higher Education Online Classrooms" point to the potential reclamation of time and embodiment amid digital interactions. And, following Kelly Fritsch (2016), if we take *crip* to be an action verb—as something that we can *do* online—then we find ourselves at the precipice of crip technoscience, a theoretically based field of research and practice that disabled people have nurtured for some time.

With decades of crip technoscience leading up to the conference presentation in 2018 that prompted this collection (the one at which I found myself not clapping), I wondered: where is the critical thought? Where is the crip legacy? My refusal to clap for a presentation so blatantly and tiredly ableist in its singular explanation of online learning as beneficial to disabled students is what Vorstermans and Mohler call a "moment of reckoning" in the final chapter of this collection. Sad, enraged, and unsure what to make of it all, I returned to my job and tried to smile at my students from behind a webcam as I delivered yet another online class.

Troubles Online as Accessible Critical Digital Pedagogy

We began to scope out potential contributors to this book in early 2019, before a pandemic scuttled us into worldwide lockdowns and distinguished routine online learning practices from "forced online distance education" (Kovacs et al., 2021), "emergency remote teaching" (Hodges et al., 2020), or "emergency remote education" (Xiao, 2021). Our focus in the initial stages of this book was on the political context and critique of our growing engagement with online education. This would not be a book touting the advances of online learning, even as global lockdowns pushed us all online in 2020. Many universities were ill equipped to make the move so quickly. This disruption to normative culture was welcomed by some disabled students and faculty because barriers once solely the burden of disabled people were now collective, global conditions that required the deployment of sweeping digital access strategies. However, this incidental access "failed to reach its full crip potential" (Chandler et al., 2022). To paraphrase Eliza Chandler and co-authors,

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accessible modes of connecting, such as through live-streamed events and classes, were standard fare in disability communities but suddenly were taken up as pandemic practices rather than accessibility practices. Since then, pandemic-focused critiques of online teaching and learning have also decentred access, leaving behind crip communities whose digital interventions have been crucial to our capacity to work in times of crisis.

As pandemic conditions progressed, we remained aware that our early obligatory online presences came with unignorable warning signs of the troubling state of the neo-liberal university and its ableist demands. These troubles are still with us as institutions work to curb what we've learned about emergency remote access into narratives of universal design and hyper-productivity as well as a type of flexibility that individualizes and self-responsibilizes students' choices in very gendered, racialized, and classed ways (Cherry et al., 2021 Dolmage, 2017; Fleming, 2021 Gair et al., 2021; Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021; Manzi et al., 2019). As the neo-liberal university strategizes for its diversity agenda (Ahmed, 2012), marginalized people's experiences of online education are still under-represented. And, although legislation in different parts of the world (e.g., the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in Ontario, where we are based, or the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States) directs accessible course building, academic ableism still unremittingly shapes learning and teaching experiences in the ableist, colonial context of higher education. And, though teaching tips about Universal Design for Learning are easy to find, the precariousness of access-related labour remains hidden (Dolmage, 2017). This techno-determinist rhetoric has been in place since the start of the e-learning movement, what Norm Friesen (2012) calls an "optimistic technological determinism" that emphasizes only the positive qualities of technology inclusion, ties innovation and progress to technology development, and subsequently marks those critical of its inclusion as Luddites, if not worse. Up against a form of technological determinism rapidly pushing us and our students online, we propelled this collection forward, feeling a deep need to create space for radical reimaginings of what critically troubling online teaching and learning can mean.

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As we stated above, not giving up is to "stay with the trouble," which means turning toward, critiquing, and resisting cultural myths that position online learning as an apolitical, ahistorical, and universally inclusive solution to the problem of inaccessible education without questioning the motives behind its implementation. For example, an institution might claw back the recently learned accessibility practices listed in Jay Dolmage's foreword in favour of getting "back to normal" but still allow some online enrolment to prevent students for whom campuses remain unsafe from dropping out. This move can be marketed as curricula enhancement, and the catch is that academic ableism takes a new form: in-person retrofits are abandoned as many with bodymind differences are relegated online not in the interest of access but for the benefit of the institution's bottom line. The notion that access can be produced through a superficial shift online lets institutions get away with not creating new classroom and pedagogical designs. Assumptions that treat technology as an inherently "good thing" ignore complex socio-cultural contours that constitute bodymind difference and buy in to neo-liberal ideologies that risk "offering more of the same" (Selwyn et al., 2020, p. 2). Instead of falling prey to simple but persuasive arguments that online pedagogy is an automatic win for access, we offer *Troubles Online* as a new orientation to critical digital accessible pedagogy that can alter our ideas of what it means to teach and learn in higher education.

Our hopeful turn toward new modes of thinking through pedagogy brings us to another trouble, evoked by imaginings of the "misfit," a feminist materialist concept that Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (2011) uses to describe those never invited into normative social structures such as higher education. Generally, misfits are not the imagined students and teachers who are young, non-disabled, tech savvy, unburdened by other responsibilities, and available to keep up with digital updates. Tressie McMillan Cottom refers to the imagined universal user of online learning spaces as the "roaming auto-didact," "a self-motivated, able learner that is simultaneously embedded in technocratic futures and disembodied from place, culture, history, and markets . . . [and] conceived as western, white, educated and male" (2017, p. 8). However, we misfits find ourselves here, online, disrupting the norms that brought us to this very collection.

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Work by misfits is chronicled in the fields of Indigenous technoscience and critical access studies, both of which describe an action-based process driven by those most affected by inaccessibility (Hamraie, 2017). In *A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online*, Jennifer Wemigwans (2018) describes how online work can affect the flow of power between Indigenous people and the state when informed by frameworks of Indigenous resurgence. And a combination of transnational studies and postcolonial technoscience points to a renewed awareness that our borders are blurred amid the context of the international online traffic of people, ideas, and technologies that keeps higher education going (Anderson, 2002). The digital labour behind higher education is a movement with deep, multidirectional roots worthy of study, held in place by the intellectual anchor of crip, disabled, mad, and neurodiverse people's legacies of theorizing access. This collection, then, can represent only a sliver of this theorizing and contains noticeable absences: despite our efforts and those of the press at recruitment, Indigenous people are under-represented in this collection. There might be many reasons for this, not the least of which is that Indigenous technoscience is burgeoning elsewhere; other groups are gathering a myriad of commentary on online teaching and learning to come. The individual and collective actions of those within and beyond this collection are reimagining online education—a reimagining that has us delighting in the prospect of a final, and hopeful, vision of trouble to push forward. *Oh, the trouble we can cause!*

The Second "Moment of Reckoning," 2020

With the COVID-19 pandemic in full force, we issued a new call for submissions to this book. We also invited the original authors to recast their chapters, dipping into both pre-pandemic and pandemic eras in their critical considerations of online work. The aim of these revisions was to ensure that emerging narratives on online praxis would carry the necessary context to inform our reimaginings of accessible critical digital pedagogy. During this time, I, Fady, was working at an art and design university as an instructional designer. A decision was made early on at the university to encourage asynchronous course delivery, but not everyone saw its

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merits. One faculty member argued that an asynchronous approach was inaccessible, that it siloed students at a time when they needed community and collaboration. She maintained that asynchronicity further divided a community of students, faculty, and staff that was already fractured.

I disagreed. An asynchronous modality acknowledged students who were working or caring for children or other family members and could not attend classes at prescribed times. This modality offered international students flexibility to participate during regular hours rather than disrupt their sleep schedules. A more flexible approach also gave disabled students access to recorded lectures that they could playback. Working asynchronously was a way of recognizing the lack of access to tech for some students in homes with only one computer or a spotty internet connection. My advocacy for asynchronous learning was prompted by the "Zoom fatigue" that many of us were (and might still be) experiencing. What this modality inevitably sparked was a constant reminder of this unusual moment—of the severe collective grief—when learning strictly on a schedule was far less important than self- and communal preservation. An asynchronous modality imagined and made room for a more complex student and teacher bodymind that was not only a product of the tech-centric 21st century but also desperately trying to survive a pandemic.

In retrospect, I think that we were both right. Asynchronicity provided the flexibility described above, but it could not build community or sustain it in the same ways as traditional in-person or synchronous modalities. Yet synchronous modalities were too rigid an approach for a time when everything was in chaos and students were thrust into situations for which they were unprepared and desperately tried to manage. Debates like these highlight tensions between instructor autonomy and student compassion, a common push-and-pull in the sphere of remote teaching, with educators seeking pedagogical tips from each other and from social media channels, including the "Pandemic Pedagogy" Facebook group that, at the time of writing, has over 32,000 members (Dam, 2021). Although we were both trying to create community and ensure flexibility—two goals that at times were contradictory—our focus on choosing the "right" modality clouded other possibilities. Similar tensions are described by authors in this collection. In "Poetic Journeys: College Students with Disabilities

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Navigating Unanticipated Transitions during the Pandemic," two students write conflicting accounts of their experiences of learning during the pandemic and of the difficulties that they faced transitioning from in-person to online learning. The students' poetry, curated by Mina Chun, illustrates the tensions between online and in-person learning. The tensions that Elena Garcia and Erika Johnson describe in "Ethical Challenges of Digital Technology and the Utah Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" are similarly caught between the digital and material worlds, but in their case the tensions are compounded by conservative religious beliefs and tenets about technology that not only limit access to technology but also profess its dangers and warn against social media as political and toxic spaces. Teaching online in a religious community thus brings up additional access frictions that remain unresolved (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019).

Many of the writers in this collection describe significant moments that changed their views, and subsequently their praxis, of online teaching and learning. For some, as for my colleague and me, the infamous "pivot" online represented another trouble: online teaching and learning seemed to be divorced from the foundational concepts of techno-ableism (Shew, 2018), crip technoscience (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019), and techno-access (Jones et al., 2021). Instead, academia's capacity to shift online quickly was touted as its own ahistorical saving grace: not only could technological adaptability keep the wheels of higher education spinning during a worldwide crisis, but also it could do so without much consideration for digital divides that amplify inequity and spark digital world making. Even when scholars did consider the digital divides created by the pandemic, the calls for action that followed, including more faculty training or improved technical solutions for educators and students, aimed to maintain the inaccessible demands that existed before the pandemic (Siddiquei and Kathpal, 2021).

This rupture had us taking sides in an ideological war that pitted asynchronous versus synchronous online course delivery against each other. I was following a UDL approach to online learning in my push for asynchronous course delivery. My colleague was invested in ensuring that emergency remote learning did not abandon those who needed the structure of the university the most. It seems that what we really needed was to complexify our digital pedagogy. There are many ways to

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embrace this complication. A mixed pedagogy—a layered pedagogy—of synchronous and asynchronous certainly would have been the best, but it too rubs up against labour issues, work-life balance, and the limits of what can be offered by faculty also dealing with the consequences of a global plague. Stommel and Morris, in Chapter 3 in this collection, speak to a third—"synchronish"—space online, one that acknowledges the absences we feel in digital spaces but makes room for us to create more accessible possibilities for online learning. The third space is cushioned between liminal zones of development in which complex hybrid discourses can offer counternarratives and possibilities for transformation (Hsieh & Saleh, 2021). Cheuk and Ignagni write from deep within this third space in their chapter in this volume. They reflect critically on a new digital space making built upon crip and decolonial sensibilities, in which blending our desires and approaches might lead us to come up with something more. In some respects, pandemic conditions made creativity and flexibility requisite parts of online pedagogy. In the final chapter, Vorstermans and Mohler suggest that one way to start this process is by applying a disability justice lens (Sins Invalid, 2015) that positions access as complex, non-formulaic, and emergent by barring the interconnected systems of racism, ableism, heterosexism, patriarchy, classism, and others "that structure higher education [and] are on full display" now, just as they were in pre-pandemic times. Selecting one modality over the other during COVID-19 thus had little impact on students' experiences, especially if our conception of access was rooted in building in accommodations rather than in creating accessible critical digital pedagogies of care that trouble the entrenched exclusions of higher education. The authors in this collection describe new and exciting possibilities for accessible critical digital pedagogy that refuse an inaccessible future of compliance with already-existing, neo-liberal forms of academic ableism.

Troubling Post- and With-Pandemic Teaching and Learning

This book is not about recovery. It is not about getting back to normal. We are not going back to normal; the troubles at the heart of this collection remain unresolved as we move through the critical praxis of teaching

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and learning online. Instead, we are witnessing a growing area of pedagogical scholarship concerned with the material and affective impacts of the neo-liberal university's push toward the digital even amid catastrophe and the subsequent exhaustion evoked by the state of the world. To strive for a return to normalcy would be to continue centring the norm in our visions for online pedagogy—a dangerous, ableist way forward.

The crux of this book is found in the notion—or the trouble—that digital learning is ready for and available to all when both in-person and online approaches remain inadequate (Hamraie, 2017; Hendren, 2020). There are complex reasons for this uncritical orientation toward universal design, as Felicita Arzu-Carmichael describes in her account of feminist activisms that consider bodies and presence in online spaces. In her chapter, "Virtual Bodies, Material Implications: Black Feminist Epistemology as a Framework for Online Education," Arzu-Carmichael challenges the false dichotomy of professional and personal as she describes how and why her black scholar-teacher-mother body was a candidate for online teaching, explaining that the cultural narratives ("romantic notions of distance education") that make online education the primary choice for some are important to understand. Arzu-Carmichael points out that, when our bodyminds do not fit into what online teaching and learning have to offer, we are faced with yet another trouble: difference becomes a problem and is wrongly inscribed on and internalized by individual users who fail to assimilate to the increasingly demanding requirements of a neo-liberalizing university system. We think of this scenario as a transference of academic ableism that accepts technological mediocrity in the name of progress without the input of those most affected (Sins Invalid, 2015). Manzoor and Bart's (2021) review of 20 years of literature on the challenges of online learning suggest that those most affected are first-generation, undocumented, Indigenous, and international students. This review demonstrates a failure to consider disability in wider conversations about digital pedagogy; *Troubles Online* is an intervention in the absenting of affected disabled, d/Deaf, mad, neurodivergent, and other crip communities from the emerging literature. Urged on by critical theories that point to the possibilities of failure, including crip arts of failure that commit to "leaving no body behind" (Mitchell et al., 2014, p. 310), the

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authors in this collection point to a wealth of knowledge in the margins: we cannot continue to engage with online praxis without accounting for the sustained perspectives and genealogies of black, Indigenous, queer, and crip digital world making, technology creation, hacking, and social media resistance. As Christine "Xine" Yao (2018) argues, online pedagogy has a responsibility to weave the realities of this digital activism into its theory and praxis; these realities chronicle legacies of survival, push back, and strength through collective vulnerability (Hsieh & Saleh, 2021).

Conclusion

This book is premised on a wake-up call: we cannot continue to offer online pedagogy as a solution to the problem of academic ableism. In response, we offer seven troubles that propelled our thinking as the starting point for *Troubles Online*. From here, in concert with the collection's authors, we follow Kevin Cherry et al.'s (2021) suggestion to move from critique to resistance and to expand our collective thinking on the troubles of accessible online teaching and learning. Each chapter challenges the usual expectations of what it means to make online learning accessible and to whom, in and beyond pandemic times. In the face of vulnerabilities and uncertainties embedded in this praxis, contributors trouble how education in digital realms shapes and responds to our ever-changing world. Necessarily interdisciplinary, this collection recognizes and narrates contemporary online pedagogical inquiry, setting new, critical standards for accessible teaching and learning and calling for justice-based approaches rather than a "return to normal." Moving forward, we anticipate more complications in this space as different bodyminds in higher education continue to change and as digital and material overlaps complexify. We hope that you find this collection troubling, in the best of ways.

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1 Caring Online

A Justice-Oriented Approach to Online Pedagogy

Jenna Reid and Fady Shanouda

Our first formal meeting happened in a nondescript boardroom. I, Jenna, remember this distinctly since Fady called me out/in near the end of the meeting, noting that I had been using language about mad experiences that unsettled him and caused him discomfort. From day one, we recognized that teaching and learning together require care and openness and are rife with complexity. So, though this meeting was unremarkable in most respects, there are a few noteworthy elements to consider in setting the context for our pedagogical explorations in this chapter. The course that we first taught together, which we have written about elsewhere (Reid et al., 2019; Snyder et al., 2019), set us up in a deeply relational teaching dynamic. Working collaboratively in this particular team setup stands out from the typically competitive and often isolating environment of academia. We built our working relationship on foundations that centred care in all of our practices. We developed and activated a curriculum that was infused with the histories of social movement organizing, was necessarily rooted in social justice politics, and engaged students in topics often understood as difficult knowledge.

We started writing this chapter years ago, well before the pandemic was a part of our social reality. Teaching online, at that time, was a standard option for the program in which we both taught as sessional

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instructors. For this reason, we have been able to think through the reactionary shifts to emergency teaching education in a pandemic compared with our experiences teaching courses designed as online courses and refined for years within our former program. Our goal in this chapter is to open up a conversation about teaching online that takes into account the complexities of virtual learning spaces—those that not only provide us with exciting pedagogical possibilities but also take us further away sometimes from the learning environments that we aim to co-create with our students.

In this chapter, we discuss the difference and difficulty of teaching about violence and oppression in online spaces versus the classroom. As Canadian mad and disability studies scholars, our teaching, although not focused on "damaged-centered research" (Tuck, 2009), does require a review of the violence perpetrated against disabled and mad people. This includes teaching about cultural genocide (in the form of the residential school system), anti-black racism (specifically occurring inter-institutionally and in relation to the psychiatric system), eugenics (including institutionalization, sterilization, and eradication), and gender-based violence (both historical and contemporary). We understand that teaching online ensures that more individuals have access to this information—that more students have an entry point into engaging with this vital content because of the nature of online classrooms and their capacity to reach students across provinces and even countries. However, the access created through online learning can also overwhelm and unsettle students, especially when the content is difficult, complex, and emotionally taxing. As much as we as online instructors can provide guidance, clarity, and context on the violence and oppression described in the online materials, this is not the same as when we can introduce materials to students in-person in a classroom—putting in the efforts to build up a foundation of support, care, and trust. And so, activating what Carmen Papalia (2018) describes as "open access," through which the student and instructor develop a trust that provides the active and flexible co-creation of space in which to shape knowledge translation in a way achieved through a living agreement, becomes difficult to materialize online. Our central question can be boiled down: how has making access

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to knowledge through online learning removed the empathy and care needed to learn about difficult and complex material?

Teaching Online before and beyond the Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to open up new requirements for teaching at our local universities, we found ourselves faced with the complexity of teaching online from a variety of different angles. At the time of proposing this chapter, both of us had experience teaching online. Jenna had five years of online teaching experience with five different courses that implemented vastly different pedagogical approaches to activate various mad and disability studies curricula. Once the pandemic shifted classes online, Jenna was able to help transition her one in-person course online with relative ease while also supporting her teaching team to implement online teaching tools with which they had less familiarity. Fady had experience teaching online in three courses over several years, and post-pandemic he was an instructional designer at a teaching and learning centre at a major Canadian university that helped faculty and students to transition to emergency remote and then online teaching and learning. In our various roles, working with experienced educators in learning new ways of teaching (new and old material) forced us to ask questions about the significance of the context of doing this work online. Many of our taken-for-granted perceptions of teaching difficult knowledge online were opened up and illuminated in new ways as we worked with others through their questions, worries, fears, hesitations, and excitement. It is in this shift, in which more and more faculty and instructors are teaching online, from emergency response to intentional pedagogy, that we perceive the importance of our project. Our intention in this chapter is to provide faculty and sessionals with an approach to teaching difficult knowledge online that does not abandon the significance of care. Care must be rooted, however, in a political orientation that connects to the communities that we are a part of, informs our curriculum development and pedagogical approaches, and is responsive to the people present in our classroom spaces (see Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021; Shelton, 2020). We thus propose a justice-oriented approach to online teaching and learning.

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Teaching Difficult Knowledge Online

Central to our conversation about teaching online is the nature of *what* we teach online. We hold true to the notion that classroom spaces are political. One of the many components that make our learning environments political is the nature of the knowledge explored, often referred to in the literature as difficult knowledge. For our purposes here, it is important to outline what we mean by difficult knowledge and how it affects the online classroom. Difficult knowledge refers to "social and historical content . . . that is traumatic or hard to bear as well as learning encounters that are cognitively, psychologically and emotionally destabilising for the learner" (Bryan, 2016, p. 10).

Working with this definition, Bryan (2016) then helps us to explore the concept of difficult knowledge through the element of emotionality—a component of learning that she claims is undertheorized, even with a significant affective turn in education. When considering emotionality alongside the concept of difficult knowledge, it is important to consider the discomfort that both learners and educators experience within the classroom space. As Bryan outlines, there are multiple ways to frame the cause and effect of this discomfort. For instance, when teaching how racism materializes in education, she discusses how she initially perceived the students as being defiant while framing herself as the educator lacking control or professional competence. This, however, as Bryan outlines, frames the relationship between student and teacher within the banking model of education, as if teachers are making deposits in their students, as outlined by Paulo Freire (1970/2000). For Bryan, emotionality allows for a shift in this framework.

By considering the experiences of difficult knowledge in the classroom through emotionality, Bryan (2016, p. 11) allows us to think through the role that *ignorance* plays in the learning process, as resistance to "confronting difficult truths in ourselves and the world." Ignorance, as she explains, goes against the very intervention of what she refers to as "the pedagogy of discomfort," a process of discovery that alters deeply embedded ideas about the world and how it operates. As Bryan explains further, introducing emotionality into the theorization of difficult knowledge in the

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classroom allows us to consider our proximity to the injustice around us and our complicity with these systems of power and oppression. Emotionality disrupts the edifice that students are just learners and replaces it with a new reality: some students are also implicated in the production of injustice.

Alternatively, Zembylas (2014, p. 390) argues that "affect theory enables the theorization of difficult knowledge as an intersection of language, desire, power, bodies, social structure, materiality, and trauma." Through a conversation about vulnerability and trauma, Zembylas outlines the limited theorization that exists on how difficult knowledge, in the form of traumatic representations, is both received and handled by teachers and learners. Pitt and Britzman (2003) are central in theorizations of difficult knowledge, helping readers to work through the representation of difficult knowledge, ethical obligations, and radical hope. However, what Zembylas (2014) offers to this conversation is a shift from what the author considers too much focus on issues of representation that takes away from the political and activist potentialities of difficult knowledge within classrooms.

Difficult Knowledge as Political Pedagogical Intervention

Shifting our concerns from the issue of how we represent difficult knowledge, and how it opens up space for radical hope, we position such knowledge as a political pedagogical intervention. The difficult knowledge brought into our mad and disability studies classrooms is born from social movement organizing. To disconnect this knowledge from its activist orientations and political engagements is both to decontextualize the foundations of where the knowledge comes from and to limit its potential to create justice-oriented change. Although as Zembylas (2014, p. 408) argues "the affective turn enhances our vocabulary to recognize the psychosocial complexities for teachers/learners—of living with trauma in the midst of powerful social, affective, historical, and political legacies"—it does not adequately consider the political implications. In conversation with the work of Zembylas, in this chapter we are particularly interested in centring what it means to teach difficult knowledge in the online classroom

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while considering the role of care and justice within the work that we do. In this way, we heed Zembylas' contestation that "good pedagogy and good curriculum are those that accommodate difficult knowledge in ways that both console and provoke in order to engage learners ethically and politically with the consequences of difficult knowledge" (p. 408).

Affect and emotion, largely rooted in psychoanalytical theories, are central in much of the literature on difficult knowledge (Britzman, 1998, 2013; Pitt & Britzman, 2003). Beyond this, one way that difficult knowledge is framed is through the concept of trauma (Britzman, 2000; Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2011; Zembylas, 2014). Trauma, in complex ways, is deeply relevant not just to the content of the knowledge that we explore within our classroom spaces but also within the communities in which we engage and/or belong. It is through trauma that many teachers and learners think about how to set up appropriate learning environments to tend to the emotional and psychical experience of engaging difficult knowledge. Trauma, as Carter (2015) explains, should be considered a political issue and not equivalent to being pushed outside one's comfort zone. Through trauma-informed approaches, teachers and learners highlight the need for creating safe/r spaces (Boostrom, 1998; Holley & Steiner, 2005; Sherwood et al., 2021). Although there is a wide array of literature available on the topic of safe/r spaces, one thing agreed upon is that they are contentious at best (Arao & Clemens, 2013; Barrett, 2010). Some of the multiple ways that safe/r spaces are described are as necessary to teaching with and about trauma (Carter, 2015), as a point of privilege (Carter, 2015), and as a practice that undermines academic freedom and rigour (Robbins, 2016).

Content Notes, Trigger Warnings, and Embracing of Discomfort

One method utilized for creating safe spaces is the practice of trigger warnings or content notes. According to Robbins (2016, p. 1), "trigger warnings originated in feminist blogs and online forums to alert readers that the posted material contained content that might exacerbate or trigger post-traumatic stress disorder or other extreme emotional reactions that might be stressful to victims of sexual abuse." As a practice, trigger

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warnings are similarly contentious in creating safety within learning environments. In one way, trigger warnings can be seen as a practice used to avoid retraumatizing students. Thus, though educators not in favour of their use fear the possibility of limiting students' engagement with difficult knowledge outside their comfort zones, Carter (2015) considers it through the lens of access and accommodation. Seeing trigger warnings in this way shifts the conversation away from the creation of safe spaces. Instead of seeing it as avoidance, Carter references the work of Price (2011) by taking up the practice specifically through a disability studies approach. In this way, Carter specifically outlines the experience of being triggered in the context of psychiatric disabilities. Doing this removes the question of whether the issue is about the avoidance of difficult knowledge and instead sees trigger warnings and content notes as ways to provide accommodations to those who have experienced trauma in their lives.

When we mobilize difficult knowledge within the disability and mad studies classroom, our inclination is to consider the practice of content notes and trigger warnings as an effort of inclusion. However, as we have written elsewhere, inclusionary practices are not in fact central to our own pedagogical impulses (Snyder et al., 2019). In this way, when we begin to open up the conversation to access, care, and justice, we are working alongside literature such as Carter (2015, p. 122), in reference to Knoll (2009), suggesting that access is in fact "about analyses of systems of power and oppression." This is, when we engage in these practices online, and in particular when teaching difficult knowledge online, as Carter aptly puts it, we are not making claims about creating safe spaces. As such, teaching online while engaging difficult knowledge is never about avoiding discomfort. Furthermore, it distinctly approaches the practice of access within its own realm of political possibilities. In this way, we turn to scholars such as Dolmage (2017) to indicate that our practices of access—whether framed through safe space, care, or universal design—are always centred on the messiness of access. Dolmage refers to the work of Price (2011), in which access is understood through its potential to "collide" and "conflict" with the learning environment (both between the learners and between the teachers). We agree with Fritsch (2016), who describes access as friction, as both a method "enabling contact" and a "kind of attack."

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Turning to the work of Price (2011) and Kafer (2013), Carter (2015) thinks through trigger warnings as enriching and expanding with the recognition that our disability studies classrooms are distinctly colonial sites. In this way, we can root our understanding of the online classroom not as spaceless and landless but as spaces where systems of power exist and unfold through how we engage difficult knowledge in active ways (see Cheuk & Ignagni, Chapter 7, this volume). More than just unfolding in the online classroom, systems of power are mobilized and exacerbated. The online classroom is not inherently less racist or less colonial and certainly is not more accessible. Online classrooms require the equitable distribution of resources by the state to ensure that all students have access to the internet. This is simply not a guarantee. An online curriculum designed for an imagined middle-class family home with separate spaces, access to computers and printers, and other "common" household materials ignores the lived reality of so many students living in different and more complex arrangements.

Situating the mobilization of difficult knowledge, and the pedagogical practices taken within and in relation to mad and disability studies, we are particularly interested in the literature that values knowledge as being both unsettling and disruptive. Again, we have written more about our curricular approach elsewhere (see Snyder et al., 2019), but to provide some context here we note that disability and mad studies are disruptive pedagogies because they reimagine loss and pain in ways that push back against the social script. Loss becomes potential, and pain is both embodied and embedded—an affective and material quality. Histories are rewritten in these disciplines that unearth the taken-for-granted conception of the normal and normative human bodymind. In fact, through disability and mad studies, the human is rewritten in relation to other humans, non-humans, and more-than-human elements that shift our collective perceptions of where our bodyminds begin and end. Unpacking these ideas with students in the classroom—in-person or online—is disruptive. More than simply evoking a sense of discomfort, our discipline can reconfigure students' reality and sense of wholeness. We are inviting them, in a clear act of justice, to think of their bodyminds in relation to others, animals, nature, and the planet. This is disruptive knowledge.

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Although difficult knowledge and disruptive/unsettling pedagogy are cornerstones of our pedagogical praxis, it is important to differentiate them from unnecessary and harmful use of damage-centred knowledge. The latter, in direct reference to Indigenous communities and experiences, is understood as research that remains focused on the pain and pathology of Indigenous communities. As Tuck (2009, p. 416) explains, though this type of knowledge creation and translation is intended to mobilize resources and changes, it is flawed in how it maintains flattened narratives of Indigenous communities that reinforce stereotypes of Indigenous people as broken. In a similar way, representations of madness and disability can take on characteristics of what Reid (Costa et al., 2012) has written previously about, patient porn—the overreliance on stories of madness that benefit those in positions of power and fail to address issues of social justice relevant to mad communities.

For this reason, when we teach difficult knowledge, our focus is not on telling histories of trauma and loss alone; we also tell stories of resistance, change, and possibility. As Tuck (2009) and Calderon (2016) suggest, as a way to challenge damage-centred research, knowledge creation and translation can cultivate desire, develop complex narratives, and challenge colonial framings through multiplicity and complexity. In order to do this, it necessitates that we address the issues surrounding not just the content of what we teach but also the impact of how it is mobilized in the classroom and the navigation of how it is taken up by both teachers and learners. Through this, we consider literature such as Ejiogu and Ware (2019), hooks (1992), and Razack (2007) to unpack the role of whiteness within classroom spaces and how it affects both what we teach and how we teach it. In this chapter, we work from the starting point that difficult knowledge is a necessary part of our teaching strategy. The authors named above remind us that what is important is *how* we teach difficult knowledge.

The Challenge of Caring Online

In this section, we aim to outline some of the difficulties of teaching difficult knowledge online—those that we have seen unfold over our years of experience, those that we have supported our colleagues through in our

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various positions, and those that we perceive as shifting in the context of a pandemic. Although we cannot presume to know what post-pandemic teaching will look like, we can consider a breadth of complexities as we frame the problem as we see it now. One thing that we know, as we compare our experiences of in-person and online teaching and learning, is that teaching difficult knowledge online adds a number of challenges given the distance, the loss of immediacy within the style and format of interactions, and the loss of capacity to interject, mediate, respond to, hear, or challenge students directly and at the moment. When providing content notes and/or trigger warnings online, we have options such as leaving students written notes and recorded messages within our video lectures. When in-person, one of the authors invites students to interrupt lectures with how they are feeling so as to work through the emotions together and as a class. Although this is still possible in online synchronous classrooms, it is impossible in asynchronous approaches.

Online teaching takes away our opportunities to provide students with moments of reassurance or to console them after class or in the hallways following a difficult session, and it changes students' ability to access or engage us through informal discussions in office hours or more relaxed settings. Finding these "moments" in an online environment is challenging since learning management systems are not designed to reproduce those moments or even care that they exist. We do not suggest that the above-mentioned spaces of caring happen without fault; as the literature points out, teaching difficult knowledge is *difficult*. The above musing is a recognition of three things: (1) transferring our skills of caring to online teaching environments requires creative adaptations, (2) doing so must take into account how our approaches affect the students themselves, and (3) our approaches to how we teach difficult knowledge ultimately must align with the values, goals, and purposes of teaching difficult knowledge.

Herein lies one of our core values of teaching difficult knowledge: care. As we understand it through our community-based work and our pedagogical praxis, care is a way to approach what we do through a centring of justice. Centering care in the work that we do is a way of attending to the larger social and political calls to create system-level changes in

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our institutional spaces. In consideration of the foundational theoretical underpinnings of care as outlined by Maynard (2017), it is necessary to ground this conceptualization of care within the frameworks of black feminist thought as a way to respond to a rich body of work that comes before us. Maynard provides meaningful details in how she integrates this approach not just as an analytical framework to approach the content that she teaches but also as a tool for creating communities of learning as she teaches students about the role of police forces and prisons in a carceral state. Care is a way to attend to teaching differently as well as a way to attend to content critically. We also see an ethics of care as a central praxis within mad and disabled communities (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018), one that attends to bodymind differences in a way that aligns with the core values of our pedagogical praxis.

Care in a mad and disability context necessitates interdependent relationships, centring of the experiences of those most marginalized, attention to and dismantling of power hierarchies, and an intersectional approach to how we work together across experiences of difference (Berne, 2015). By turning to such thinkers and community organizers, we aim to acknowledge the labour of black feminist thought when thinking through our practices of care. Engaging an ethics of care in this way, with a consideration of its implications for intersectional communities, requires us to attend to care not just as a pedagogical tool but also as a contested political praxis. Caring, then, in this context, is mobilized as a tool for teaching difficult knowledge as a practice rooted in justice. Acknowledging the role of an ethics of care as central in education is not new (see Noddings, 1984/2003). We believe that the work of caring in our teaching practices is even more pressing in the online classroom.

We find ourselves left with the question of how we transfer the essential quality of teaching with care—especially for those students most affected by the course content—now that we are all online. Although practices of care in-person are not inherently simpler or more straightforward, most people have less familiarity with how to cultivate and nurture care in virtual spaces. The extant literature seemingly reduces the concept of care to an instructor's ability to communicate adequately, keep up with emails, provide effective feedback, and ensure a safe learning space, more

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often than not left undefined (Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021). And though there is no doubt that these practices matter, equating care with base-level administrative duties fails to get at the core issues at hand. Caring online, we believe, is about more than adequate communication. Through this approach to care, we also mean a deprivileging of Western and neo-liberal conceptions of knowledge. Furthermore, power, in justice-oriented models of care, is reorganized and distributed much more equitably. Care for us involves the ongoing acknowledgement from everyone in the classroom of our differences and an openness to engage with these differences as possibilities that can shape the classroom for the better.

Radical Love: A Justice-Oriented Online Approach

Up to now, we have discussed the significance of a pedagogy of care for teaching difficult knowledge online. We want to extend our conception of care to include two important themes: love and justice. Our focus is on the latter, but we do not think that it is possible to discuss a justice-oriented approach to online teaching—one that cares for students—without first describing our understanding of love and its intimate connection to teaching and liberation.

Discussions that tie together love and teaching are not new, of course. Love is a tenet of teaching and a central part of the canonical workings of education's critical pedagogy figures: Freire (1970/2000), Gómez (2015), hooks (2000). Their main arguments are the same: love, specifically radical love, reorients our relations to one another and demands the removal of hierarchies and the establishment of a different way of communicating and dialoguing. As hooks (2000, p. 121) argues, "domination cannot exist in any social situation where a love ethic prevails." Taking up radical love might be difficult for individuals invested in traditional models of teaching because it requires some risk from them: that is, to "relinquish oppressive practices in the classroom" (Douglas & Nganga, 2015, p. 64), practices that sustain hierarchical models of knowledge and learning. Love, therefore, acts to re-/establish our relations with one another in the classroom or online. Certainly, love works to remove possibilities of the domination of one group/individual over another.

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Caring and radical love, therefore, share an approach, that of undoing traditional ways of teaching and learning. They are both focused on the inclusion of knowledge and ideas from other sources, not just the instructor or a specific canon. It is an opening up of ways of knowing and being and learning in the classroom. We could end our theorization of education here with a connection between caring and love, but that would continue inevitably to situate education within the confines of university spaces—classrooms, learning management engines, and labs. Orienting toward justice, as we will discuss, is necessary to open up ways of learning about difficult topics that does more to critique university history, traditional teaching approaches, the co-opting of access, and most importantly the imagined contemporary university student. Let's start with access.

As Mingus (2011) argues, "we must understand and practice an accessibility that moves us closer to justice, not just inclusion or diversity." We contend that accessibility as a practice itself might be lost. And, if not lost, then co-opted to such an extent as not to resemble the accessibility that Mingus was referring to over a decade ago when she wrote those words. Access is now everywhere. It is all over our institutions of higher education, and it is certainly part of the discourse in going online—before and even more so after COVID-19. Going online, for many disabled students, faculty, and staff, was an example of successful accessibility practice. However, this access has not, in any real way, moved us closer to any real sense of justice. Access, when we experience it in higher education, is often just a slightly better version of the accommodation model. Instructors include accommodation or accessibility statements; they are more flexible regarding due dates; they might even include materials that describe or discuss disability/mental health from critical viewpoints.

We do not deny that these are significant, important, and hard-won changes, but they occur in only certain parts of higher education. There are still too many corners of the institution that continue to practise a bygone age of disability exclusion that has no place in the contemporary university. Still, this accessibility is not moving us toward justice, and it certainly is not steeped in pedagogies of care or love. Even after global shifts in education following the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing and experiencing three-hour synchronous lectures, adherence to deadlines,

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reading lists unchanged since the pandemic, assignment instructions that fail to reflect our time and place, and demands to keep things as they are—to prevent a loss of rigour or academic integrity (see Jungic, 2020).

For all of these reasons and more, we want to abandon access and accessibility as models for thinking about teaching and learning online and consider approaches informed by care, love, and justice. We define a justice-oriented approach to teaching and learning online as one that acknowledges the role that universities played in excluding bodyminds[1] of difference from spaces of learning for centuries and that continue to do so through the adherence to traditional pedagogical approaches that stem from the Industrial Revolution and are perpetuated through neo-liberal logics. We envision a justice-oriented approach that challenges its learners, recognizes their expertise and possibilities for contributions, and cares for them deeply, knowing that their pasts are more complex, their current times competitive and anxiety inducing, and their futures more challenging and unknowable than ever before. This is an approach that sees in students possibilities for change, revolution, and acknowledgement that some of them are already engaged in these efforts in their communities. It is an approach that foregrounds love—knowing that our work in teaching and learning is not about preparing students for future employment. Our task is to create a caring space where students learn how to learn—including how to learn about difficult knowledge—so that they will continue to do so forever.

Unlike traditional methods, a justice-oriented approach imagines within learning spaces disabled, d/Deaf, mad, and chronically ill students; black, Indigenous, and people of colour students; women, queer, and trans students; fat students; and students of all types. Their histories are acknowledged, their personal/political stories are recognized, and their desires are supported and encouraged. A justice-oriented approach, therefore, requires faculty and sessionals to understand that the decisions they make, the materials they use in class, the assignments they create, and their synchronous approach versus asynchronous approach are not apolitical. Regardless of the subject matter or the disciplinary approach, we have to unearth and acknowledge the histories of exclusion in our fields of study so as to communicate this difficult knowledge to our students and

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to ensure that our field grows in the direction of justice. This process does not take place at one point in time but is ongoing, constantly in motion. In the online space, it has meant legitimating students' personal narratives (Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020) by acknowledging their homes, families, partners, or children; their work schedules; and their access to materials, computers, the internet, or other technology. It means considering the role that online teaching, and other forms of educational technology, can play in remaking educational spaces when their use is informed by a crip technoscience (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019) and histories of tinkering and hacking within disability communities toward crip futures (Kafer, 2013). It also means that we need to acknowledge the material things that make up teaching and learning outside the institution that allow it to perform its central task. We have learned that it is not just the buildings or the land or any of the physical parts but also our relations with one another and the sharing of space (digital or otherwise) that comprise the university in which learning takes place.

Many reading this will imagine that a justice-oriented approach involves more work. This, in fact, might be true at first. However, this work is not accomplished in silos or alone. It is work that should be conducted across all levels of the university and through the online tools that we share. It must also not fall on the most marginalized or those in precarious positions of employment (Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021). It is also not all on the faculty or sessionals but it must include the students and the community. After all, this approach is founded upon conceptions of love that move away from acts of domination. Therefore, we must reimagine relationships within teaching and learning as interdependent, in which students contribute to the development of the course and to each other's learning as well as that of the instructors. At the start of the pandemic, several authors, in some thought-provoking articles, invited instructors to reimagine student contributions. They suggested asking students to develop course learning outcomes. Others suggested having students co-facilitate courses, especially graduate courses, in which this practice is already popular. In massive online open courses (MOOCs), especially those designed rhizomatically, students not only select the learning outcomes but also co-write the course outlines. In Chapter 8 of this volume,

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Stevens and McCall speak to leveraging participatory design as a way to make first-year writing courses more inclusive. In addition to these examples, we can imagine a more even redistribution of responsibility for teaching and learning when it comes specifically to the production of access in the practice of shared notes or note taking, in peer-reviewed grading, and in student-versus-student engagement. Decentring the expert is not just good teaching practice, or a clever way to manage or eliminate overwork for the instructor, but also a more caring and just teaching and learning space since it acknowledges everyone's possible contributions. Students from different social locations, experiences, and ideologies are invited to engage in dialogue and debate understood by everyone as inherently valuable.

Conclusion

Surely, one of the benefits of the pandemic will be that it offers many of us a chance to think deeply about our teaching practices. Going online, as troublesome as it was and continues to be, did unsettle our taken-for-granted approaches to teaching and learning. This shift felt uneasy. It stirred feelings of dread by having to understand a new learning management system, to distinguish synchronous and asynchronous approaches, and to determine ways to ensure students' participation and engagement. It also exposed the inequities between teaching positions. Full-time faculty were paid to prepare for this transition and given support through the hiring of TAs, whereas sessionals often had inadequate resources to prepare and were not compensated for the additional hours that they worked. These inequities, among many others that we have not named or unpacked, have significantly affected people's lives. Yet we also know that the feelings of discomfort often attached to major change can be productive. Much like teaching difficult knowledge as a disruptive pedagogy, we need to sit in discomfort as we transition from traditional pedagogical models to a justice-oriented approach founded upon a pedagogy of care, steeped in radical love. We need to remember our embodied responses to change and understand that, like getting through these past few years, we can orient ourselves differently to teaching and learning to make higher

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education—in-person and online—a more caring, loving, and just place for us and our students.

A justice-oriented approach makes things uneasy. It is troubling and disruptive. But rather than seeing these as bad qualities, we cherish the generative possibilities that flow from their upheaval. After all, universities were never designed for individuals with bodymind differences. For centuries, universities have continued to operate as white supremacist organizations of knowledge. This has not changed since going online. What is exciting, of course, is that it could change.

Note

1 See Clare (2017), Price (2015), and Schalk (2018) for more information on the term "bodymind."

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2 Virtual Bodies, Material Implications

Black Feminist Epistemology as a Framework for Online Education

Felicita Arzu-Carmichael

I started teaching online in the spring of 2018. I was not recruited to teach online courses; rather, I taught online out of personal and research interests as well as practicality. That is, I was unable to teach face-to-face (f2f) courses because I cared for my toddler full time. Prior to giving birth to my child, I taught both online and daytime f2f courses. However, after my child was born, I sought to teach either online courses or night classes so that I would be able to make accommodations for my child's care. Teaching an f2f course in the daytime would have required me to place my child in daycare, which would have been financially difficult for me and my family. As Power (2020) recognizes, child-care provisions tend to fall on women; thus, teaching daytime classes was not a likely option for me. Even travelling to the campus for job interviews was difficult. It posed financial hardships given academia's problematic reimbursement culture (Sagers, 2019). Thus, I found myself oriented only to teaching online classes. Grappling with the reality of my own lived, embodied experiences and assessment of my knowledge claims (Collins, 2009), I developed an awareness of bodies oriented toward online education and factors that might lead to this orientation and positionality.

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The factors that make online education the primary or only choice for many students are important for scholars to understand, particularly considering how the demographics of US-based postsecondary students have shifted. A 2011 National Center for Special Education Research study that followed students for a number of years revealed that special education students were less likely to attend and complete college (Newman et al., 2011). Furthermore, the American Council on Education reported that more than 45% of undergraduates were students of colour compared with 30% a decade earlier (Esponisa et al., 2019). The report also revealed that most of the students were Hispanic. Across all racial and ethnic groups, the majority of undergraduate students were women. Although these results are not specific to students in composition courses, the data are valuable to scholars in rhetoric and composition studies, especially considering that most undergraduates will take a first-year composition course to satisfy their general education requirements. Moreover, research shows that "online courses increasingly are a primary means of instruction for many first-year composition students" (Committee for Effective Practices , 2013) and that online courses and programs in technical and professional communication have seen consistent growth (Martinez et al., 2019). Considering that more students are learning online and that inequities in online learning have been exacerbated and intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lederman, 2020), the online writing classroom would benefit from black feminist epistemology to challenge the ideology that online education is a solution to issues faced by primarily underserved populations. Moreover, as Humphrey and Davis (2021, para. 2) assert, "the shift online has not removed the racist norms that were normative in face-to-face classrooms." I argue that, if we pay attention to the bodies that show up in online education, then we can better grapple with issues such as presence and absence that seem to matter differently online than in f2f education, in which bodies materialize in traditional ways and there is more institutional support for students. I further argue that, through a black feminist epistemology, we can actively reframe what it means to be an online teacher and an online student, and it can help us to draw attention to how marginalized bodies are made to "fit" and line up with online learning. More importantly,

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black feminist epistemology can "make space for particular questions to be asked and investigated" (Henry, 2005, p. 96) about the work that we do when we teach online.

Thus, in this chapter, I draw from black feminist epistemology because it accounts for "intersecting oppressions" (Collins, 2009, p. 138) and "prioritizes action, experiences, and epistemological frameworks beyond the theoretical" (Moore, 2018, p. 188) that can inform how we conceptualize bodies in online education. Black feminist epistemology thus informs how scholars might engage in online activist work that accounts for the bodies that are retained, the bodies that leave, and the implications for the university in influencing the choices made for and by these bodies. This approach is important because, as Åhäll (2018, p. 37) asserts, "the opening up of academic spaces for feminist research has not meant actual feminist change of those spaces." This need for feminist change in virtual spaces has become more apparent during the pandemic, in which systemic inequalities continue to permeate our society. Black feminist epistemology provides a framework for grappling with online education and supports teacher-scholars in being mindful of these inequities and intersectional oppression while they strive to engage ethically with material bodies in virtual spaces.

In the sections that follow, I first discuss some of the cultural narratives surrounding online education, and I outline how the presence and absence of bodies have been discussed in relation to these narratives. I then turn to black feminist epistemology to argue that this framework shifts how we consider bodies in online education, challenges how we think about issues of presence and absence that could be harmful classroom practices (Fuller, 2020), and provides an opportunity to engage in activist thinking that highlights and tackles how marginalized populations are (under)served in online spaces. Throughout this chapter, I also weave in my own lived experiences as a mother, a black immigrant scholar, and an online writing instructor. These experiences, I argue, corroborate my argument and remind readers about the material impacts of our conceptualizations of online education on specific bodies.

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Cultural Narratives and Material Conditions Surrounding Online Education

Online education is often perceived as an alternative to the traditional and more formally accepted f2f education (Di Leo, 2020). As a result, online education is often understood as education for mostly non-traditional students. For example, Sapp and Simon (2005, p. 471) note that online courses can serve "diverse and hard-to-reach student populations." These populations taking online courses are also perceived to live "complicated lives" (Fike & Fike, 2008, p. 71). Moreover, June Griffin and Deborah Minter (2013, p. 146) share that online learning "can alleviate some of the practical challenges of getting to class that often lead 'at risk' students to drop out of face-to-face classes (e.g., irregular work schedules, unreliable transportation, lack of childcare, other familial obligations)." Speaking to the material conditions of students who tend to gravitate toward online courses, Ji-Hye Park and Hee Jun Choi (2009, p. 215) add that adult learners who do not receive support from their families are "more likely to drop out of online courses."

But accommodating students who have trying circumstances is not the only perceived benefit of online learning. Some scholars believe that online education can also address issues of diversity. For example, some have argued that online education can be empowering (Chick & Hassell, 2009) and provide opportunities for students to participate in a class on a more "*equal* footing" than they would have in an f2f classroom (Sapp & Simon, 2005, p. 484). The invisibility of students' material bodies in online courses is said to have the capacity to "break down barriers to learning such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and the social obstacles related to popularity and fashionability" (Sapp & Simon, 2005, p. 484), even though the technology that facilitates online learning has been well documented as not neutral (see Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020; and Vorstermans & Mohler, this volume). Scholars have also claimed that online writing courses are agentic because students have control over the choices that they make in the courses in terms of topics, genres, and digital tools (Stella & Corry, 2016, p. 166), a claim that disregards the abilities of students to make these choices in the first place (Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021).

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My analysis of my online students' perceptions of online learning corroborates the cultural narrative that online learning is the de facto solution to problems faced by non-traditional students. In my fully online first-year writing course, I asked students to share their thoughts on online education as a substitute for face-to-face education. To protect the identities of my students, I use pseudonyms. In response to this prompt, Yesenia shared the following: "It was very difficult for me to get a job during the school year because my classes were so scattered [that] I did not have sufficient time in between to go to work. However, if I had taken online classes, I could have found a job with ease because of the flexibility." Her "scattered" schedule encouraged her to consider online learning. She was clearly compelled to place the onus of responsibility on herself to design a schedule conducive to obtaining a job, and when that failed to materialize Yesenia shifted to online learning. Because her courses did not line up how she wished them to, she took it upon herself to fix the situation by taking courses online.

Similarly, Xavier shared the following: "I had a friend who went to a university for a year and had to drop out. It was just simply not right for her. She now attends college online, is on the honour roll, and is planning on graduating pre-vet next year." Telling in Xavier's response is that traditional onsite learning was "not right" for their friend. This response draws from the rhetoric of "fit" in which students' "complicated lives" (Fike & Fike, 2008, p. 71) can make onsite learning challenging. Moreover, such students are "left to their own devices to fit themselves" into places "or drop out of the higher education system" (Oswal, 2015, p. 263).

This idea was shared among other students. For instance, Ann revealed the following: "I believe it [online learning] gives kids that might have troubles in school the chance to still succeed, and if you take online courses seriously, like I do, you can truly benefit so much." Although she did not elaborate on the kinds of trouble that students might have in school that would require them to take online courses, it was evident that she believed in the value of online education for students with "troubles." In fact, Ann added the following: "I have grown up watching so many troubled kids get taken to boot camps or other places because of behavioural problems. When these troubled kids get out of these places, the best thing they can

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start to do for themselves is go to school. I believe the best option for them is online school. Finishing school can be such a big accomplishment for kids that really face troubles throughout their lives."

These representations portray online education as the "solution" to "problems" faced by non-traditional students, problems that contribute to challenges in their obtaining a traditional f2f education (Moeller, 2009). Positioning online education as a solution to a perceived problem is concerning because there are structural inequalities that disadvantage an already vulnerable group of students (called "at risk" in some of the literature). Yet many of my own students hold these perceptions, perhaps because of narratives that they themselves have heard and internalized. Romantic notions of online education for under-represented students might align with neo-liberal logics by which students themselves are asked to "fix" the "issues" that cause them not to perform as well as their counterparts when these issues are actually structural and institutional (Cherry et al., 2021; Grimaldi & Ball, 2021; Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021). More concerning, though, is how online students themselves often internalize these neo-liberal logics and see online learning as neutral, so that any issues that arise are their own rather than connected to political and economic conditions.

For example, in the fall of 2019, I attended a writing conference at which a presenter, who identified as having a disability, shared how, if it were not for online courses, they would not have been able to earn a degree. The narrative was met mostly with nods of agreement: "How wonderful an opportunity the presenter had to be able to earn a degree online." However, I could not help thinking about whether the presenter had desired online learning from the outset or was simply influenced by the lack of accommodation in traditional f2f learning. Much like Yesenia, Xavier, and Ann, the presenter believed that online education was the solution to their problem rather than understanding how, as Oswal (2018, p. 4) argues, a "built environment or a social structure [can] . . . also be disabling, and, in fact, be the cause and whereabouts of disability." It can be seen that these narratives do not demonstrate the possibility that social, economic, and political structures, as opposed to students' personal situations, contribute to their challenges in academia.

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Although many believe that online education creates a positive opportunity for a population that otherwise would not be able to attend school, some scholars raise concerns about disparities in online education, including how it continues to marginalize and exclude a population already "othered." In "Going the Distance with Online Education," Jorge Larreamendy-Joerns and Gaea Leinhardt (2006, p. 570) argue that "distance education has always been known for its departure from the conditions in which teaching and learning 'naturally' take place." They believe that, to a certain extent, distance education presents itself as a "pedagogical oddity" (p. 570). They add that one of the roles of distance education in higher education is to be a "substitute for on-campus learning" (p. 577). I argue that the idea of distance education as a "substitute" is significant because it troubles the idea that online education is a better "fit" for non-traditional students. For example, in "Fault Lines in the Terrain of Distance Education," Laura Brady (2001, p. 348) argues that, when economic factors motivate pedagogy, the gap between access and equity can be widened as teachers and their students are "differentially displaced." Importantly, Brady asks us to pay attention to how the metaphor "distance learning" implies displacement (p. 351) and that access to technology should be explored as one reason that online students might struggle.

This idea is corroborated by Michael W. Gos (2015), who argues in "Nontraditional Student Access to OWI" that many writing program administrators and OWI (online writing instruction) teachers take for granted computer use in students' homes. Gos reminds readers that family income plays a significant factor in computer ownership (p. 311) and that students who do not have access to computers at home might rely on the computers in public libraries, but their access in these spaces might be limited. This limitation was especially true under conditions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, for even access to libraries or the internet in public spaces was limited or restricted (Manzoor & Bart, 2021). As I discuss elsewhere (Arzu-Carmichael, 2021), and as many scholars have indicated, a sense of place matters to how students engage virtually and materially in online writing courses.

With a critical eye to cultural narratives surrounding online education and its effects on non-normative bodies, Marie Moeller and Julie Jung

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(2014) offer ideas that can help us to grapple with the material conditions of online education. In "Sites of Normalcy: Understanding Online Education as Prosthetic Technology," they draw from scholarship in disability studies to examine how certain conceptualizations of online education "reproduce an ideology of normalcy that marks difference as deficiency" (para. 2) and whereby "disparaging attitudes toward online education become attached to the bodies of its users" (para. 3). Moeller and Jung challenge this construct of online education as breaking down barriers to learning when they argue that this "altruistic agenda" reveals how online education "helps to sustain the status quo by providing the means and rationale for keeping some bodies out of traditional educational spaces" (para. 6). For instance, in the foreword to this volume, Dolmage speaks to issues of proctoring technologies that contribute to mandated timed test taking. These non-normative bodies of which Moeller and Jung speak include people with disabilities, people living in remote areas, employees, and parents.

The authors' use of prosthetics as a metaphor to argue that we need to pay attention to how technologies (like online education) maintain an ideology of normalcy is also important in understanding issues such as presence and absence because they allow us to ask questions not only about *which* students are served by online education but also *why*. Moeller and Jung argue further that, by providing access to online education for "at risk" students, institutions do not then need to make any necessary material and ideological changes that otherwise would have included the students. As Paolo Freire (2000, p. 74) asserted, "the solution is not to integrate them into the structures of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves.'" To be clear, I am not arguing that online education should not be an option for students who might need it; instead, I am arguing that, when online education is the *only* means through which a population of students can earn an education, we should question this reality and advocate for change. This change is especially crucial given our recent experience with online education, which became the only means of learning for most students because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not surprisingly, online education continues to target non-traditional and "at risk" students. In my research on online programs, I discovered

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that one institution in the American southwest described its distance learning program as "designed to serve students who may not be able to pursue an education through traditional means." Another institution relied on its former and current online students to share their experiences, and one student indicated that "I am a different learner, I am a different student, I am different from the norm, . . ." arguing that the online program offerings at the institution nurtured this difference. Although it was the student who noted this difference, online students typically have been described with emotionally loaded terms such as "disadvantaged," "low performing," "educationally deprived," and "at risk." When students are described as at risk, they are typically thought of as struggling academically because of their personal backgrounds. For example, the common notion that online learning is ideal for students typically introverted in f2f classes suggests that we value students who speak up in class. These classifications highlight the harm that online education can do to students already marginalized because of their personal characteristics or backgrounds, especially when they are expected to accommodate themselves in online instructional settings. As Collins and co-authors find in Chapter 4 of this book, the voices and experiences of marginalized students must be centred in narratives about online education. The above literature reveals that, though online education has its benefits, it also has aspects that are complicated and potentially harmful to certain populations.

Some scholars have worked hard to avoid the fact that issues of online education can be explained at an individual student level by seeking connections between student performances and individual student characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity, gender, GPA, financial aid, and history of online course withdrawal. For Cochran et al. (2014), if these "risk factors" are known, then educators can predict which students might drop out of online courses, and there could be strategies of intervention in place to prevent the dropouts from occurring. Although Cochran et al.'s findings showed some variables, other studies revealed more definitive relationships among students' characteristics. For example, in "Adaptability to Online Learning: Differences across Types of Students and Academic Subject Areas," Di Xu and Shanna Smith Jaggars (2013) conducted a study of students' adaptability to online courses. Their study

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revealed that "males, younger students, Black students, and students with lower levels of prior academic performance had more difficulty adapting to online courses" compared with their performance in f2f courses (p. 6).

Although the data presented here seemingly are meant to help institutions identify better ways to assist students who might struggle with online courses, these generalizations do not account for the role of the institution in why these characteristics matter so much to how students adapt to online education. In other words, we should consider the social and political structures and their oppressiveness, as opposed only to students' personal backgrounds, that could create barriers for some students but not others. Thus, recognizing that black feminist epistemology "was born from the need to resist oppressive structures" (Moore, 2018, p. 193), I argue that this framework can contribute to our conceptualization of online education and the bodies made to fit in this space.

Black Feminist Epistemology for Online Writing Instruction

The discussions above show cultural narratives about online education and material conditions of bodies that participate in online education. What does a black feminist epistemology have to offer to how we think about such cultural narratives and material conditions of online education? Collins (2009, p. 270) reminds us that epistemology investigates "*why* we believe what we believe to be true"; it "points to the ways in which power relations shape who is believed and why." How we come to understand online education in the way that we do, including recognizing why some bodies are oriented toward this space, is based on traditional knowledge claims about what online education affords and to whom. A black feminist articulation of online education would challenge these traditional knowledge claims about education and discourses (Henry, 2005), contribute to growing calls for online pedagogies that draw from black critical theoretical ways of knowing (Humphrey & Davis, 2021), and reveal how virtual bodies experience material inequalities (Asenbaum, 2021; Nakamura, 2020). Online education is presented as a solution to the problems faced by marginalized students. Furthermore, these students then believe that online education is the solution to their problems (Moeller &

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Jung, 2014); for example, for me to be able to care for my child, I must teach online. Interestingly, though, marginalized students oriented toward online education, because of their material conditions, are themselves then blamed when they later fail and drop out of online courses.

Nirmal Puwar (2004) takes up ideas of marginalized bodies in *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place*. She questions what happens when bodies not expected to occupy certain places do occupy them (p. 1). The innate relationship between bodies and spaces is undeniable. Puwar reminds readers that, even though today women and racialized minorities are in positions that they were previously excluded from, "social spaces are not blank and open for any body to occupy. . . . While all can, in theory, enter, it is certain types of bodies that are tacitly designated as being the 'natural' occupants of specific positions" (p. 8). Indeed, following Ahmed (2001), Kellie Sharp-Hoskins and Julie Jung (2017, p. 177) note that "histories of who and what matters render some spaces more accessible to some bodies than others." My own lived experiences as a black woman and a mother seem to align with the ideas that, though some bodies seem to belong to certain spaces, "others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically, and conceptually), circumscribed as being 'out of place.' . . . [T]hey are space invaders" (Puwar, 2004, p. 8). Thus, I assert that black feminist epistemology in online education can lead us to counter normative ways of thinking about who belongs in certain spaces and asking more difficult questions about the role of the institution in issues of presence and absence in online courses, issues that also bring to the forefront how bodies matter in online places and how they matter differently.

For three years, I worked as a writing program coordinator; for one of those years, I took my son to work with me. At two months old, he started to accompany me to work as I attended meetings, led workshops, and mentored new graduate teaching assistants at my former institution. My supervisor was understanding, and I never had to ask if I could bring my son with me to work. She even offered her office to me to breastfeed my child. Although I was welcomed to bring my son to work, I always worried about snickers and stares indicating that I was invading someone else's

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space. I did not feel like a "natural" occupant of this space. In this regard, Puwar (2004, p. 8) admits that, though the relationship between certain bodies and spaces will certainly change, it will not be without consequence since it will be shifting how these bodies traditionally have been placed. As my experience suggests, embodied spatial practices invite conversations about how power shows up in the classroom (hooks, 1994) and how bodies show up in educational spaces (Hill, 2019). In this regard, I argue that we can better respond to issues of presence and absence in online spaces through a black feminist epistemology, particularly by accounting for the relationship between bodies and technologies. There is an inherent relationship among technologies, places, and bodies. For example, in "'Wanted: Some Black Long Distance [Writers]': Blackboard Flava-Flavin and Other Afrodigital Experiences in the Classroom," Carmen Kynard (2007) challenges existing narratives of online communication that recognize how students represent their racial identities. Kynard draws from the work of critical geographer Kathrine McKittrick to remind us that "geographies are always infused with distinct yet multiple knowledges and language systems" (p. 334). Kynard reminds us that, "Since space and place are always much more than just vessels that contain peoples and their social relations, geographies represent connective and connected sites of struggle" (p. 334). Thus, it is important to resist a simplistic connection between online pedagogy and a desire or preference to teach and/or learn online. Black feminist epistemology allows us to "advance new, alternative, and sometimes oppositional interpretations" (Henry, 2005, p. 96) that might shift how we think about our online educational experiences.

Ostensibly a benefit to me, my orientation toward online classes based on socio-economics also marginalized me because of institutional edicts that make my material conditions matter. As Fleckenstein (2003) contends, institutional rules tend to ignore the material constraints of students, and in part this creates obstacles for students to receive an education. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these obstacles since many institutions have been forced to shift more pedagogical practices to online spaces, but many students might not have the institutional support that they need to succeed. In examining the relationship between

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place and literacy, Fleckenstein argues that "obstacles to academic success evolve in part because of institutional edicts that ignore those material constraints" (p. 66).

These constraints can include course scheduling, a factor that affected the decision of one of my students (Yesenia) to shift to online learning. Drawing from Mary Soliday, Fleckenstein shares how institutional rules tend not to include the "life situations of students, especially working-class students—commitment to families, jobs, commuting distances—[that can] transform those lives into impediments to education" and prevent the students from attending and graduating from a university (p. 66). Although institutional rules might not have created students' material conditions, these edicts "make the students' material conditions matter" (p. 66). Fleckenstein's ideas of material constraints and obstacles affect students and teachers alike, and when our bodies move online they disappear, which maintains the status quo of traditional education (Moeller & Jung, 2014). Thus, it is important for students to be able to name their experiences and feelings about why learning online might not be "right" and for them, and we can assess how those experiences and feelings are affected by institutional rules that complicate access to education.

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3 Critical Digital Pandemic-Based Pedagogy

A Conversation with Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris

Chelsea Temple Jones and Curtis Maloley

In the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, when once-optional online pedagogy became mandatory and we were, strangely, becoming accustomed to the unpredictable governmental and institutional responses that directed how and when we could teach, Curtis Maloley and I reached out to Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris for an interview to gather their reflections on pandemic-led pedagogy. Stommel and Morris are the authors of *An Urgency of Teachers: The Work of Critical Digital Pedagogy*. Their collective work is recognized in teaching and learning circles as the panacea of critical digital pedagogy, and as co-producers of the podcast *Podagogies: A Teaching and Learning Podcast* Maloley and I found ourselves continually reaching for their books, blogs, and Twitter advice as our online pedagogy took on the bleak aura of the "difficult, imperfect, physically and mentally draining, and profoundly time-consuming" genre of emergency online teaching in late capitalism (Samuels & Freeman, 2021, p. 246). Our talk took place following the inception of this book, at a troubling time when my previous understandings of online praxis—and "trouble"—were being eclipsed by unpredictable but undeniable fundamental changes to life and work.

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Here, grounded in the widespread dissatisfaction of online teaching (plus the realization that it had suddenly been thrust on us all), Stommel and Morris reflect on the craft of teaching as one that can forefront the actions of trusting students and teachers, being in the moment online, and tapping into our individual and collective vulnerabilities even as a pandemic amplified the social inequities already inherent in traditional, pre-pandemic online pedagogy. We offer this interview excerpt, available in full as a *Podagogies* episode,[1] as a reminder of how it felt to be at the centre of a massive pedagogical shift. We position the interview early in this volume to honour Stommel and Morris's foundational work in the area of critical digital pedagogy—a launching point toward the broader discussion about accessible online pedagogy. This discussion was made possible, in part, by their work resisting the conventional transfer of ableist, disembodied pedagogy into online and hybrid spaces and instead advocating for online pedagogy as social justice (Stommel et al., 2020). Below is a snippet of a recording from January 22, 2020, a conversation between experienced online pedagogues navigating that strange time between panic and praxis.

> *Curtis Maloley*: What were your first thoughts about the way that postsecondary institutions were very suddenly doing this transition to remote delivery?
>
> *Jesse Stommel*: The first thing that I remember thinking about and kind of feeling some ire about, to be honest, was the very frequent use of the phrase "pivot to online." And the reason that this bothered me is that for years, in our work and sort of a central tenet that runs through our book, *An Urgency of Teachers*, is this idea that what happens in a face-to-face class, and what happens in an online course, are fundamentally different that you can't just take what happens in a face-to-face course and neatly pour it into an online class. . . . My other issue with this idea of the pivot was it suggested a neat and tidy pivot back . . . [as if we] would all just pivot back and get to see each other once again. What we've seen to be true . . . [is] that there has been no neat and tidy pivot back to face-to-face. . . . I think that our work has fundamentally changed. And this moment is continuing to change our work in ways that we couldn't have anticipated.

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Sean Michael Morris: I think the first thought that I had was just, "Oh, no." Jessie and I have been working on this for a very long time. We've been working together for about 20 years and through developing this whole idea of critical digital pedagogy and the kinds of online design that go along with it, the kinds of teaching methods, and that sort of thing that can kind of go along with it. And it's really been very much a grassroots effort. . . . So, when we saw this happen, one of the first things I mentioned to Jesse was that this is probably the worst thing that could have happened to the work that we do. Because what was going to happen was everyone's going to shift online without any thought, without really figuring it out. And so many people who don't want to teach online, never want to teach online, students who never wanted to be online, are now suddenly going to be in a space of teaching and learning that, frankly, Jesse and I have always sort of considered less than the best possible.

Stommel: Well and also the idea of choice. I mean, so many of the people and students who are suddenly asked to learn online didn't make a choice to do that. The truth is that not everybody is born to be an online teacher, not everybody is born to be an online student. There are different people who learn in different ways at different times in their lives. And one of the most important things is us getting to choose how we approach our education. And so, so many people being thrust into situations they had never planned for. . . . And then the other piece is that we're also dealing with institutional crises that are affecting our work in such drastic ways, funding crises, students who are facing food and housing insecurity before the pandemic are now facing it even more. Students who have experienced chronic trauma or chronic illness suddenly now also dealing with an acute feeling of trauma and illness on top of that, so our work isn't what it once was. And, again, I'll say I don't know that it is ever going to be or maybe never was what we thought it was.

Chelsea Temple Jones: What needs to happen now then? Where do we go from here?

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Stommel: I think that there's a really obvious answer for me, and I don't see a lot of institutions jumping at this call that I've made pretty frequently, which is that institutions need to be investing in faculty development, and they need to be investing in student support. They need to stop investing their money in remote proctoring solutions and plagiarism detection services, in student retention, algorithmic student retention software packages, learning management systems. We need to recognize that what we didn't have in this moment that we desperately needed was a robust emphasis on teaching and learning pedagogy, faculty development, teacher preparation. That was the disaster of this moment.

Morris: I have been this person during the entire pandemic saying I don't believe in silver linings. And I'm not trying to say there's a silver lining of the pandemic at all. But I do want to point out that—as proctoring services and as everyone's been online and starting to encounter these same problems that a lot of the community around critical digital pedagogy had been talking about for a while, proctoring services, Turnitin, and surveillance—all of those sorts of things that have been common practice for a long time, but only for a portion of people who are learning because only a portion [are] . . . learning online, are now suddenly exposed to a lot more people. And we're seeing that conversation widen now. And so people who were never even concerned about what was happening digitally are now suddenly very concerned [about] . . . what's happening today. . . . I want to say too that a lot of the work that Jesse and I have done, maybe this sounds weird, . . . actually rises out of a sense of dissatisfaction. Neither of us actually like[s] teaching online. And that's why we teach online. And that's why we do this work. What we love about classroom teaching is not happening in online space. And so what we're trying to do is figure out ways we can make that happen online. . . . So one possibility that might be coming at us is that dissatisfaction is much more widespread now. And so there's a chance for bigger conversations to take place around what kind of pedagogies are necessary for really making online learning work.

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Maloley: Do you want to maybe say a little bit about the theoretical foundation of that and how you approach learning in an online environment?

Stommel: [Our] work started our foundational research, and reading and encountering of pedagogy started with the ideas of critical pedagogy, and particularly the ideas of Paulo Freire, and the ideas of bell hooks, Henry Giroux, quite a few others working in that area, and then also tossing in who aren't necessarily traditionally thought of as critical pedagogues. People like John Dewey, people like Peter Elbow. And so thinking about those ideas and sort of what's at the heart of that work. So reading your world, teaching students to be critical observers of their world, toward the end of making change in their material circumstances and in the world more broadly, thinking about the relationship between students and teachers. And the fact that the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students is not particularly effective and doesn't create a community that is hospitable [to] the kinds of learning that we want to have happen. And also thinking about student agency and how do students become full participants in their education? And what needs to happen? What barriers do we need to knock down? And, ultimately, our project with critical digital pedagogy was to think how does that work happen in digital space? And how do our digital technologies in some ways frustrate that kind of work? And also how does the digital provide affordances to support that work? An example . . . [is] the learning management system, Sean and I wrote a piece, it was a two-part blog post, and it was cheekily titled "If bell hooks Made a Learning Management System." Ultimately, we argued that bell hooks wouldn't make a learning management system. . . . She writes about connection, she writes about critical hope, she writes about joy, she writes about excitement, she writes about us seeing one another bringing our full selves to the work. And you think about the discussion forum inside the learning management system. Is that a place where we bring our full self? Is that a place where we see one another? Is that a space of excitement and

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joy and critical hope? The answer is no, it's not. It's not built to be that.

Morris: . . . One of the other aspects of the ways that critical pedagogy intersects with the digital is critical pedagogy in a Freireian tradition really wasn't just about classrooms, it wasn't about schooling. It was very much about helping people, especially oppressed people, people who are in lower classes, labouring classes, sort of begin to understand their world and be able to work toward change. That translates into a classroom environment in certain ways. But, ultimately, the work was social justice. It was work that took place outside of schools, . . . so teaching should sort of address that; when we're in digital space, too, the idea of like an open pedagogy of a sense of learning happening on the actual web is really important. Because we have to recognize that what we're doing is we're not teaching students, we don't want to teach students, to work inside of a [learning management system]. There'll be no purpose behind that once they graduate. What we do want to do is help students learn how to be on the internet.

Jones: One piece of your work that I've come to really connect to is your writing on digital learning as a third space. It's not this binary that we can move between, but it's a third space, it's something a little different. And I'm just wondering if you can speak about that more, . . . what you mean by a third space when you write about it that way.

Stommel: One of the things I think is really important is that we not only bring students into a process by which they help build their education but also that they help build the environment in the space for their education. And the idea of space when you're talking about digital space is complicated. Where does it live? Where does the course live? I have a course assignment that I do with my students in a digital studies course where they have to rebuild the internet. And I asked questions like where is the internet? Who is the internet? Is the internet a person? Does the internet just have people? And you're asking these kinds of questions to start to get

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them thinking about how it functions. It isn't just a geographic location; the web is people. And so, if we think about how we move about in a space, like the web, it functions very differently than a college campus, there isn't a neat and tidy corollary, you can't go to, for example, the website of a college campus and have it in any way reproduce the physical space of the college campus. . . . And it's one of the reasons why I like the idea of a third space, because it forces you to ask questions about how this space might function significantly differently. And also how we might engage and find one another in different ways in that space.

. . . I love those few minutes before class starts in a face-to-face classroom, where there's just a hum in the room, and you're maybe not talking to students, but just kind of overhearing a bunch of conversations, saying hello to people as they come in. And then I love that moment at the end of class where some people stay, and they linger, and they want to continue conversations. And maybe you're talking to them as you walk out into the hall. Those are such idyllic kind[s] of classic college moments. But those are moments I love. And so, if you think about when you're teaching online, and you're learning and figuring out how to teach online, stop putting so much energy into reproducing the content, delivering content to students. Put all of your energy into thinking about how do I find those moments with my students? How do I do activities with my students that feel like that? . . . There aren't easy answers in the learning management system, because those systems are not designed to reproduce or even care that those moments exist.

Maloley: I've been in some focus groups with both students and faculty members, and almost all of them brought up that exact point—those 10 minutes before class, the moments after class, in many ways, those are the most central to the learning. Those are the moments, you know, when learning feels most tangible and real for sure. Sean, what are your feelings about this?

Morris: I very much agree with what Jesse's saying. I think the experience over 2020 has been interesting, because Jesse and I

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have been talking about this stuff for so many years. And yet here we had to practise what we preach in a way that we've never had to before. We've both given digital keynotes now, we've done digital workshops now, we've done all these things that we never thought we would have to do. And it's been, even for us, . . . there's been this kind of an adjustment, that adjustment comes again, from that sort of critical looking at what am I doing? Where am I? What is this space look[ing] like? What are the affordances? And what are their limitations? So, when COVID happened, one of the first things that sort of was my alarm was—I'm the director of [the] Digital Pedagogy Lab (DPL)—and the lab is traditionally a very much on-[the-]ground event, so much so that I call it a gathering. It's a wonderful kind of learning experience to have. So now I had to try to bring that online. And I found myself thinking the same things that so many teachers I've talked to think: "Well, okay, if I do that, can I move it here?" . . . And I'm going to work with faculty all the way through and try to figure out how this is going to work. And so much of it did occupy that kind of third space. And one of the ways that I sort of describe that third space I think is sort of coy, but I talk about things being "synchronish." So things aren't synchronous or asynchronous but synchronish. And digital pedagogy learning is very much a sort of synchronish thing, it takes place over a single week, but over 20 different time zones. So people are not attending at the same time; no one's attending at the same time. But they're all kind of learning at the same pace. They're all experiencing the event in the same ways across those time zones. And in different spaces. I also really encourage people to bring whatever space they're in into whatever they're doing, into whatever learning they're having, whether that means that they don't have as much time to do the thing they need to do or they want to do. Or that means that they're bringing their kids in, or they're bringing their spouse in, or whatever that might mean. Or they're doing Digital Pedagogy Lab on this side of the screen, and they're doing their work on that side of the screen, kind of thing. . . . But to try to really think about, well, what space are you actually in? How does that then become part of the learning experience?

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Stommel: I think a really good example of this is suddenly students are learning online, from their childhood bedrooms. . . . And yet we demand things of them, like you have to turn your camera on. Well, what does that mean for a student who's learning from their childhood bedroom, what kind of invasion of privacy is that requirement? It has a good philosophy potentially underlying it—we want to be able to see each other, that's valuable—but you can't want to see others [at another's] expense. And then, interestingly, I know folks who turn on those virtual backgrounds, and sometimes those virtual backgrounds are about screening that private space that you don't want to share. And that's a really valuable thing to be able to do. On the other hand, I think sometimes people put those screens on because they're being asked by their teacher, being asked by their boss, being asked by even just the culture of an organization to not let their private light bleed into their professional life or their academic life. And right now that's impossible. My daughter has Zoom-bombed so many of my meetings, so many of my classes, and to try and keep her out would be to basically try and imagine myself as a not full human being right now. I have to work in an environment where my kids and my dog and my husband are there, and they're part of the work. And so, yes, like, we have to be attentive to the idea of creating the option of privacy and protecting those private spaces.

Maloley: If I'm an instructor, and I really want to begin to practise some of the things we're talking about today, what would be your advice to me in terms of how I might start doing something like this, in particular if I have a huge class or a class that has so many boundaries and barriers that are not of my choosing?

Stommel: I just have a short answer. . . . Several years ago I challenged people on Twitter to come up with their four-word pedagogies, try and see if they could explore their pedagogical approach in four words, and inspired by the idea of a six-word story where someone writes a narrative in six words. Tons of amazing, amazing responses to that. But mine was "start by trusting

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students." And I've stuck with that sense. And it continues to resonate with me almost any paragraph of my syllabus, almost any decision I make in my teaching, I can bring it back and let it sit next to the idea of start by trusting students. And it becomes almost a test of whether or not my approach is going to work, really. And I think the one thing about start by trusting students is that it scales. Trust scales. There . . . [are] lots of things that don't scale, but trust does, and it scales immensely.

Morris: Whenever someone wants advice, it's often a best practice they're looking for, something that they can plug in and play. And that just doesn't exist in critical pedagogy. So something like start with trusting students is what I would refer to as a habitus, the habitus of critical pedagogy, the place from which you teach, the place from which you make up the new rules, and the place from which you improvise. And getting in touch with what that is for you, as a teacher, recognizing how do I teach what's really important to me, about my students, about my subject, and then teach from there, and don't give that piece up, but then teach from there. . . . Just blow the rules out the window, because essentially, if you're teaching from there, students will learn, you're going to do your job, everything's going to go okay, as long as you're teaching from that spot.

Stommel: I guess I would say one other thing, which is that the advice that I would have for institutions is kind of a corollary to my advice for teachers, which is start by trusting teachers. Teachers' work is deeply idiosyncratic; teaching is a craft. It's something that people have worked on over many, many years and honed, suddenly telling all of your teachers you must teach inside the learning management system. That's not started by trusting teachers. It's not started by trusting the best instinct of teachers who know their students way better than the institution does in many cases.

Jones: . . . I think we should go back and think a little bit about what we were mentioning earlier, what you were saying earlier, about the

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institutional responsibility around this. I mean, you've described this process of online teaching that isn't particularly appealing; it's not always very desirable. And a reason for that is because these traditions, these pedagogical traditions that many institutions have sort of built up and held on to so tightly, are still being enforced. So how can institutions be accountable for what is happening now? And what can they do to create an environment where critical digital pedagogy is possible?

Stommel: Maybe this isn't quite to answer that question, because I kind of did. Pay teachers better is my immediate answer.

Morris: I rarely speak at the institutional level. Generally, I'm much more concerned with teachers and students and, from that grassroots perspective, the idea of change coming from the bottom and going up. But one example actually comes out of the University of Colorado, Denver, where I work. We have a new chancellor, and as soon as she came on the first thing she did was . . . what she called a listening tour, where, essentially, she had open Zoom sessions where people could just come and talk to her. And it was really cool. And, of course, there were certain things that needed to be said, and certain ideas that need[ed] to be conveyed in those, but that listening is actually really, really key. It's something that we do for students, it's something we should be doing for teachers, we should be listening to their needs.

When this happened, when the pivot occurred, at least in the States—right?—we had no leadership from the government around it. And so there was no "Here's how we're going to respond. Here's the things you need to be concerned about." So every university was doing a different thing. And within universities, different departments were doing different things. And so it was complete chaos. What could have happened at that moment was for people to sort of say, "Okay, we're taking a pause, let's get together and talk, let's figure this out." And there wasn't that kind of community situation, there was a kind of control. . . . I mean, faculty development is great. But some of the best faculty developers are people actually in class teaching and talking to each other about

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how teaching happens. I mean, obviously, pay them more, and pay them so much more. And give people secure jobs. That's absolutely essential. But let's really start dialoguing about all of this.

Note

1 For a full transcribed version of this conversation, see "Episode 14: Critical Digital Pedagogy with Dr. Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris," https://www.torontomu.ca/centre-for-excellence-in-learning-and-teaching/teaching-resources1/podagogies/#!accordion-1697658960757-episode-14--critical-digital-pedagogy-with-dr--jesse-stommel-and-sean-michael-morris

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4 Online Social Work Education in Canada

Disappearing Disability in the Academy

Kimberlee Collins, Kristin Smith, and Donna Jeffery

In this chapter, we demonstrate how online environments make disappear the phenomena of disablement through reproducing neo-liberal ableist expectations about learning and teaching. First we present some background about online education and the research project from which this chapter stems. We follow this background with a literature review of crip education and online embodiment in order to frame how disabled bodyminds[1] are regulated in online social work educational contexts. We then discuss cripping online education in order to consider how the generative disruption created by disability online can shift online learning and teaching. We close with an invitation to attend to this shifting and uncertain terrain that prompts us to acknowledge the complexities, nuances, and contradictions embedded in discussions of embodiment, online education, and disability rather than to default to tidy answers and solutions.

Amid a global pandemic, universities sought financial survival by quickly moving almost all curriculum and services for students to emergency remote digital platforms a temporary solution during the crisis for classes that are designed for and intended to be delivered in the

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face-to-face classroom. Although our writing of this chapter spans the pre-pandemic and current-pandemic era (from 2017 to 2023), the knowledge that we generated through our qualitative interviews with educators and recent social work graduates was firmly embedded in their experiences with online education, not emergency remote education.[2] We invite our readers to reflect on the differences and similarities that exist within online education and emergency remote teaching in relation to disability.

Background

Online education, with its roots in correspondence education (Di Leo, 2020; Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020), has been hailed as a cost-saving, flexible, inclusive form of education that has the potential to reach underserved populations such as disabled students, non-traditional adult learners, and Indigenous, rural, and remote communities (Bullock & Fletcher, 2017; Cummings et al., 2015; Kent, 2015; Moore et al., 2015; Murders, 2017; O'Shea et al., 2015). For several years prior to the pandemic, this interest in online education had significantly increased the financial resources spent by universities to promote online learning (Bates, 2018a; Zidan, 2015) as well as raised the number of students enrolled in online education (Bates, 2018a, 2018b; Bullock & Fletcher, 2017; Zidan, 2015). For example, the provincial government funding of eCampus Ontario in Canada coincided with an increase in online enrolment (Bates, 2018a). Despite this increase in promotion, the digital divide as well as issues of digital equity remain. Additionally, disabled students are still under-represented in postsecondary education (Dolmage, 2017; Kinash et al., 2004). However, some universities are reporting higher numbers of disabled students (at least those who have disclosed disabilities) enrolling in their online education programs (Lambert & Dryer, 2018; Verdinelli & Kutner, 2016). Not only are some disabled students enrolling in online programs, but also many have stated that they choose online education because of their disabilities (Cole, 2019; Kotera et al., 2019; Murders, 2017; Verdinelli & Kutner, 2016). Flexibility and the time needed to manage personal lives were often-cited reasons (Cole, 2019; Verdinelli & Kutner, 2016). It is important to note that, though online education can work well for some

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disabled students, for others their physical institutional-based accommodations are not transferable to online learning (Facknitz & Lorenz, 2021).

Although universities increased spending to promote online learning even prior to COVID-19, the debate about the benefits of online learning remains unsettled and contested, particularly given the ever-shifting terrain of a pandemic and the rise of emergency remote education. Although it is still early (as we move, at the time of writing, through the second year of the pandemic), a preliminary survey of people's experiences of teaching and learning during these uncertain times indicates that, despite the challenges of an emergency remote education, most postsecondary students would elect to keep the option of online learning going forward (McKenzie, 2021). If the survey results reflect broader desires for online options, then it is possible that universities might extend online platforms, and if so then it will be crucial for postsecondary educators to understand and articulate the ramifications for disabled students. To think critically about how disability plays out in online educational spaces, we must centre the voices of disabled and marginalized students experiencing online education, such as in Hannah Stevens and Mary McCall's Chapter 8 of this volume, in order to avoid (emergency) online education tendencies that default to neo-liberal logics.

Project Description

This chapter draws from findings and research from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded project called "Online Social Work Education in Canada: What Happens When Critical Pedagogy Goes Online?". Between 2014 and 2017, this study explored how online education formats are shaping knowledge produced in Canadian schools of social work in which a mandate to promote social justice–based professional practices coincides with significant funding constraints and other restructuring measures found within both social service agencies and universities. For our research, critical pedagogy is viewed as different from mainstream pedagogy since it seeks to disrupt seemingly neutral knowledge by teaching students to address interlocking systemic oppressions, such as anti-black racism and other forms of racism, the effects of

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colonialism, heteronormativity, ableism, and others. According to Wagner (2005, p. 263), teaching and learning through critical pedagogy enable educators and students to engage with "unsettling" course content often "fraught with tension, emotion and trepidation."

The project posed three overarching questions:

- What are the possibilities and constraints for critical pedagogies within the online classroom?
- How do educators adapt their complex teaching strategies in ways that move beyond matters of technical expertise and narrowed measurements of learning?
- What kinds of institutional support are required for the successful transfer of critical pedagogies to online formats?

Ultimately, this project considered how neo-liberal university restructuring includes pressures to emphasize cost-containment measures, efficiency-driven management styles, and expectations of labour flexibility and adaptability (Blackmore, 2001, 2002; Brown, 2019; Davies, 2005; Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021; Smith & Jeffery, 2013) and how these shifts reduce knowledge production to a standard measured against economic worth and efficiency while curbing possibilities for emancipatory pedagogy (Newman & Johnson, 1999). In short, the study sought to explore the experiences of students and instructors in a social justice field adapting to an online learning and teaching ethos.

Methods

Twenty-eight participants were interviewed for this study, including 12 full-time faculty members, 10 part-time instructors, and six recent graduates. Each had first-hand experience teaching or learning in distance social work education programs. Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling and through professional networks across two Canadian universities (Bryman, 2001). The audio-recorded interviews were conducted in person or over the phone and lasted between one and two hours. The interviews employed open-ended questions focused on the following

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four areas: the pedagogical strategies adopted or encountered in their distance education courses, students' responses to challenging course content in the distance formats, how educators and students make sense of tensions in their teaching and learning practices and how tensions might shape identities within distance formats, and how educators and students manage those tensions in their day-to-day university lives. These recordings were transcribed, and each member of the research team reviewed the transcripts seeking tensions and contradictions within the interviews. These moments were then analyzed by applying Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson's (2000, p. 5) concept of "working with the whole," in which there is a close reading of participant accounts and attention to the material contexts in which the learning and teaching are situated. Formal demographic data were not collected for this study; rather, identity markers were noted when participants disclosed them during the interviews. Additionally, we present quotations from our participants in an anonymized fashion to protect their confidentiality within a relatively small Canadian context of critical social work education.

Literature Review

Cripping Education

Disability activists and their communities have long been involved in cripping. The activist reclamation of crip, leading with the "disruption that disability creates" (Reid, 2016, para. 8), is used to expose how a corporeal standard of humanness becomes naturalized (McRuer, 2006). Crip theory gestures to how our bodyminds exist and are contested in and through multiple cultural and social locations (McRuer, 2006, 2018). It posits that crip experiences must be central to resistance to neo-liberalism (McRuer, 2018). Crip theory is an intersectional analytical framework beginning from the perspective of bodymind difference that unsettles binaries such as normal and abnormal and gestures to the slippery nature of difference (Chen et al., 2023; Kafer, 2013; McRuer, 2006). Drawing from Adrienne Rich's concept of compulsory heterosexuality, crip theorist Robert McRuer (2013) describes the compulsion toward normalcy as compulsory able-bodiedness. Although compulsory able-bodiedness is

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often taken for granted, for decades disability communities have been pushing back against this dominant understanding of bodymind difference by drawing from "crip" as a term of identification and action that references multiple forms of embodiment (McRuer, 2018). To crip is thus to reject binaries and to position disability as desirable and generative (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019), thereby challenging and resisting compulsory able-bodiedness (McRuer, 2013).

Crip theory has also been employed in relation to education and critical pedagogy. For example, Dan Goodley (2014) reminds us that disabled students, by their very presence, crip education through unsettling, disrupting, and exposing the failings of traditional pedagogy and the ideal of the normative student. David Mitchell and colleagues (2014, p. 308) suggest a turn toward cripistemologies in which "crip/queer bodies shift from liabilities to be secreted away into active vectors of insight from which one may engage in classroom models of collective understanding. Through such developments, crip/queer subjectivities become a way of knowing the world; embodiments akin to other forms of discredited knowing such as femininity, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on (yet, importantly, containing all of these differences at the intersection of what makes bodies crip/queer)."

More recently, scholars have noted how the pandemic exposed the inaccessibility of higher education and how the exhausting, time-consuming nature of emergency remote learning mirrors the experiences of disabled students and faculty attempting to receive institutional accommodations (Bones & Evans, 2021; Samuels & Freeman, 2021). Andrea Goicochea (2021, p. 69) reflects on the nature of emergency remote learning in which cripping time recognizes "the fluidity of participation in remote learning and viewing time differently, relinquishing authority over time and participation." Crip time has been referred to as an explosion rather than an expansion of time since it changes our understanding of how long things can and should take and how these understandings are rooted in normative ways of being (Kafer, 2013). This shifting and unpredictable nature of crip time has been described as itself a form of resistance (Price & Kerschbaum, 2016). In pre-pandemic writing, we considered changing conceptions of time in online learning

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in which flexibility allowed a slowing down of institutional time (Smith et al., 2018), whereas the increased pace of digital learning and teaching blurs boundaries between work and home (Smith et al., 2020). Then, in the wake of COVID-19, we expanded this focus by considering how many universities modified faculty and instructor deadlines as well as mandated or advised flexible (unknowingly crip time–inspired) deadlines and accommodations for students (Samuels & Freeman, 2021). Below and with this changing context in mind, our discussion on embodiment online and disability gestures toward how disabled bodyminds are regulated in the online social work educational contexts.

Embodiment Online and Disability

Discussions of online embodiment are ongoing and contested. From Megan Boler's (2002) assertion that the body is represented in a stereotyped and reductive form online, to Danielle Stern's (2011) suggestion that online educational spaces create a "queered classroom" through the ambiguity of bodily performance, the terrain is unsettled. Offering a reframing of this debate, Seweryn Rudnicki (2017) suggests that, rather than disembodied online, we are, in effect, translated. Rudnicki argues that, ontologically speaking, translation grapples with the contrasts and similarities between the "physical body and its digital representations" and thus "reflects the specificity of 'virtuality,' its simultaneously immaterial but real, actual and concrete character" (p. 6). In this way, the characteristics of physical bodies are reconfigured to form new objects through translation. This process of translation encompasses a wide range of technologies (e.g., from Zoom to learning management system platforms to WhatsApp), and thus the online sharing (e.g., an Instagram selfie in an introduction post on a discussion board) can be understood as a translation of the material body into digital data.

It is important, however, to contextualize translation. We are translated through technologies that are embedded within and reinforce norms and systems of oppression (Boyd, 2016). As such, technology cannot be considered neutral, and therefore data information and its usage are always political (Green, 2020). It is impossible to separate translated digital

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data from social structures, power relations, and policies, and thus data information is a social construct and reflects embedded social relations (Jasanoff, 2017; Jasanoff et al., 1995). Moreover, Cheryl Reynolds (2018, p. 183) asserts that the "panopticonised character to participation" in relation to sharing translated data in online education platforms makes students and instructors vulnerable to symbolic and material violence, since these platforms assume certain social and digital capital. Notably, discussions on the levels of surveillance and social capital arose in response to emergency remote learning as institutions and instructors grappled with ethical guidelines on online participation, such as keeping cameras off during synchronous online classes (Finders & Muñoz, 2021; Greenhow et al., 2021; Kovacs et al., 2021; Moses, 2020). As Ellen Rose (2017) suggests, technologies, such as learning management platforms, centred on increasing the social presence in online spaces, ultimately do not address the ethical implications of online learning.

For disabled online learners, institutional moves toward online learning respond to bodymind difference in ways that reflect McRuer's (2006) compulsory able-bodiedness that pushes us toward normalcy. For example, much of the early discourse speculated that disabled students would be the "early adopters" of new technology and more interested in online learning (Kinash et al., 2004). Thus, online learning has been promoted as a way of increasing access to education and thereby increasing inclusion for disabled students (Cinquin et al., 2019). Although inclusion has been a long-held goal of some disabled communities hoping to access higher education (Porter et al., 1991), inclusion is accompanied by critiques of inclusionism. Inclusionism highlights how institutions tolerate disability rather than address disabling systems and conditions (Mitchell & Snyder, 2015; Shanouda, 2019). Importantly, Chelsea Temple Jones and colleagues (2023) gesture toward the critical tensions and overlaps through the term "inclusion/ist."

Much like hollow gestures toward diversity, inclusion/ist policies are demonstrated through the chronic understaffing of disability services in universities in which disabled students are included and tolerated but not supported within the neo-liberal-ableist education system. Michael Rancic (2018) suggests that this might explain why some disabled students

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are not seeking accommodations or are actively choosing invisibility through online learning. For disabled learners, online learning is offered as a pathway toward compulsory able-bodiedness via inclusion rather than as a mode of cripping education. In other words, online environments make disability disappear, along with the phenomena of disablement, by upholding normative expectations of learning and teaching. It is through cripping an inclusion/ist understanding of online education that we can begin to think through some of the tensions highlighted in this chapter.

Alternatively, expanding notions of embodiment through crip theory supports moving away from bureaucratic classification structures such as inclusion or accommodation (Chen et al., 2023), particularly since crip includes non-normative embodiments, forms of illness, trauma, or unwellness, not often included within rights-based systems. However, as m. remi yergeau (2017, p. 87) notes, crip has "privileging rhetors who are critically conversant and academically able," thereby contradicting crip's expansive framing of non-normative solidarity. Yet a crip orientation asks us to keep definitions and meanings open, including concepts such as embodiment. Importantly, this requires a collective response to "pushing the boundaries of interpretation" rather than a narrow and individualizing focus on accommodation (Chen et al., 2023, p. 9).

Online Social Work Education in Canada

Choosing Invisibility/Visibility in Online Education

Our research demonstrates that students are making strategic choices about online education. As the literature on online education and disability asserts, some disabled students choose online education since it allows them to complete assignments and participate at their own pace and as a way of avoiding stigma from other students and faculty and staff (Cole, 2019; Kotera et al., 2019; Lambert & Dryer, 2018; Murders, 2017; Verdinelli & Kutner, 2016). Additionally, other disabled students have noted their desire to perform a preferred identity through online learning (Verdinelli & Kutner, 2015).

In our project, a sessional instructor shared a similar experience of invisibility narrated by a student in the online course: "I purposely never

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spoke about my race because I didn't want people to frame everything I said from that lens, that I'm a black woman. And so, and specifically talking about when issues of race came up, I didn't want to be framed as an angry black woman talking yet again about my lived reality." This narrative highlights an instructor's understanding of why someone might choose invisibility through online education.

Conversely, one graduate student who identified with a disability found the invisibility of online education difficult:

> I'm about as privileged as they come, but you know there are personal elements that I sometimes bring to the discussion, and I kind of got tired of putting myself out there. . . . On some level, I think having the visual markers can be really helpful because people are more kind of in tune with . . . [the] experience a person might be bringing into the interaction without having to take the time to write it all.

Indeed, the choice to disclose identity or remain anonymous was noted by a sessional instructor: "[What] I find quite fascinating is the sense of anonymity. You know there's no visual to the student who is part of the conversation. So sometimes students will disclose[, and] . . . sometimes they won't." Indeed, several students and instructors (faculty and sessional) noted the lack of identity markers in online spaces, unlike what might be "visible" in a classroom, and echoed, perhaps unknowingly, the ongoing debate between embodiment online as stereotyped and reductive (Boler, 2002) or as queered (Stern, 2011).

The decisions that students (and instructors) are making about disclosure in online settings are highlighted in the literature (Cole, 2019; Lambert & Dryer, 2018; Murders, 2017). Although there has been speculation that visibly disabled students might prefer online learning so that they can choose when to disclose (Barnard-Brak & Sulak, 2010), Jay Dolmage (2017, p. 10) suggests that disability is invisibilized on campus until accommodation is granted, and then those with invisible disabilities are "routinely and systematically constructed as faking it, jumping a queue, or asking for an advantage." Moreover, Fady Shanouda (2019) asserts that

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the Western colonial university encourages disabled students to "overcome" their differences and accommodate themselves to the university through neo-liberal practices, such as self-management. Similar to Rua Mae Williams' work on meta-eugenics (2019), Shanouda describes this as a eugenic desire of the university to either mask or eliminate disability, in which the biocertification process of students seeking accommodations is intrinsically violent. Working with Ellen Samuels, Shanouda (2019, p. 8) suggests that we need to consider the consequences of "limiting inclusion to individuals who fit neatly into categories, like disability," and question the "visibility politics" that enable some people to be visible in the university but not others.

Moreover, within neo-liberal-ableist universities, differences are flattened through inclusion/ist framings in that all instructors and learners are meant to accommodate themselves to the eugenic desire of the university. Through the lens of eugenic desire, disabled students and instructors must disclose their disability via ableist processes to receive accommodations (Shanouda, 2019). However, through cripping online educational spaces, moments of resistance and difference emerge. Crip, through its creative disruption of pedagogical practices and its reshaping of time, brings attention back to the bodymind within translated online spaces. Claiming crip offers alternative ways of being and knowing within online institutional spaces. Importantly, as Nirmala Erevelles (2014, p. 85) reminds us, coming out crip requires a continued commitment to attend to the material conditions that construct disability "in relation to other categories of difference."

Flexibility of Online Education

Choosing online education is not only about the option to choose invisibility in an attempt to subvert the eugenic desire of the university. For some disabled online learners, the need for balance is paramount. For example, a disabled graduate student noted that

> I have some depression and anxiety, and so the opportunity to pace myself and tackle what I could, you know, on any given day, was really critical for my not becoming overburdened and overstressed

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> and therefore sick, right? Like it was huge because I was really, really worried about, you know, I'm essentially doing four jobs now, and how on Earth am I going to do that and not have . . . you know a relapse, and so the opportunity to work from home and have my kids do their homework on the bed beside me and all of that, and then said I could balance right and not kill myself in the process.

This need for balance was particularly noted by graduate students who were both working and raising children. As one student stated, "I remember I got pregnant, and . . . I came across some statistics. The number of women who were completing [a degree was] really low, and . . . my mantra at that time was just I didn't want to be a statistic of somebody who gets pregnant and then drops out of school because of parenting-related stuff." Several students with children noted the flexibility of online programs, which meant that they did not have to deal with the organizing and expense of child care to obtain their degrees. Boler (2002, p. 338) argues that the "hype" around online learning only serves further to inscribe traditional roles for women as homebound and the primary caregivers of children. We query how the gendered regulation of online learners might parallel the experiences of disabled students online as educational practices continue to reinforce ableist assumptions that disabled students are unable to compete in the traditional classroom, for it creates a distinction between which bodyminds are deemed acceptable in traditional place-based education and which are not. However, we suggest that this selective choosing of flexible online options is a way for students to crip their online experiences, making the university accommodate their lives rather than accommodating themselves to fit the university.

However, though this flexibility made balancing education, work, and life easier at times, and provided students and instructors with more room for thoughtfulness and reflection, it also came paradoxically with increased demands on time. For example, students and instructors noted the time needed to engage with such a large amount of written text. As one faculty member noted, this increased flexibility also came with the pressure to be "available 24 hours a day." Another faculty member described flexibility as paradoxically both a strength and a weakness: "I think the strength of online . . . is that we're not taking people from community

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and from family especially from northern Indigenous communities to the south to urban areas. . . . Then the limitations are [the assumption that] the online schedule . . . fits within work, family, and community." In this sense, the flexibility of online education can come with the assumption that it is possible to do it all—full-time education, work, and family and community life. The structures that encourage productivity foster ableist ideals and give advantage to those who can meet the demands of neo-liberalism—thus privileging those "who embody the normative capacities of neoliberal identities" (Mitchell, 2014, p. 3). Online education is no exception.

As McRuer (2018, pp. 14, 16) notes, neo-liberalism establishes "flexible production" often connected to less expensive labour costs and is linked to austerity politics "wrapped up in the rhetorics of emergency." McRuer was not writing about online and remote education during a pandemic, yet the connections are stark. It is through cripping online education, the disruption that disability creates online, that there can be new ways to subvert oppressive systems and new ways to be together online in the university. Furthermore, as we navigate the ongoing pandemic, crip theory reminds us of the necessity to remain attentive to how new modes of being and micro-activism can be subverted and subsumed by neo-liberalism (Erevelles, 2011; McRuer, 2018). This is particularly important given the potential of the university to make use of this moment of emergency and austerity to consider remote learning as a permanent cost-saving measure and an empty gesture toward inclusion/ist accommodation in addition to a revenue-generating maneuver especially as it relates to international students and the higher fees that they pay. As Iris Young (2011) notes, how we resist and remake ourselves is shaped by the structures in which our relationships are embedded. Thus, though we might attempt to subvert neo-liberal ableism within the university, we are always in danger of reproducing the very inequities that we seek to disrupt.

Slotting Bodyminds Online

As Felicita Arzu-Carmichael highlights in Chapter 2 of this volume, certain bodyminds are more likely to be slotted (and slot themselves) into online education. Although some disabled students enroll in online education as an inclusion/ist form of accommodation, some faculty remain

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unsure whether they have the skills to support disabled learners in online spaces. For example, Michael Murders (2017) found that faculty in mid-sized public universities in the central United States questioned whether they had the knowledge, technology, and support to handle online accommodations. This finding resonates with our study, in which a faculty member questioned the ability of all instructors to engage pedagogically with online education: "I use the word *dedicated*, but maybe that might be too strong, but to have—and again I'm not necessarily in favour of streams—but I'm just, I just think it requires a lot on the part of the faculty member teaching online. That they might be able to do a better job, a more effective job if that was their domain." Although this faculty member was clearly wary of creating streams that would relegate some instructors to online classrooms, their comments suggest a lack of confidence in their ability to deliver and engage in critical pedagogy online. This speaks to the lack of training and comfort in using online learning platforms experienced by some instructors. Indeed, our research found that some online instructors were unaware of which academic supports were available to online students, with one sessional instructor stating that "my understanding was that distance students can access some support from [the writing centre], but I don't know how much." Additionally, some instructors believed that online education limited the accommodation that they could provide to students, with one sessional stating that, "If there's any issues around accommodations, which happens quite a bit in the distance courses because people who are not able to come on campus or are challenged by other forms of abilities, and you know if they have a learning disability or any of those sorts there, it's, you know, the online space is limiting in that context, you know. There are only so many things I can offer students." Some universities offer online training modules for instructors, but often they are provided on a short-term basis or are voluntary (Lobasso, 2013). The Ontario Public Service Employees Union notes that many faculty members in Canadian colleges have expressed concern that online education, in fact, is shifting resources away from students and faculty toward management and private corporations, particularly through precarious hiring practices (MacKay, 2014).

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This shifting of resources in the university was noted by a faculty member as a reason for disabled students to choose online learning as an accommodation since traditional classrooms would not be accessible: "We're especially short of accessible classroom space for students with disabilities, particularly students in wheelchairs or students with hearing disabilities who need clear sightlines. So we're very, very poorly resourced for that. And while we've been pushed to teach in distance [education] for various institutional reasons, at the same time there's been a push to really increase our class sizes." This statement demonstrates how the cost effectiveness of neo-liberal logic operates within the university to slot disabled students into online courses and programs and leave the inaccessibility of the university unchallenged. In the words of Esther Ignagni and colleagues (2019, p. 315), "the university imagines accessibility, which tends to follow a neoliberal logic of identifying a problem, individualizing that problem, and creating a solution that is motivated by cost effectiveness rather than disability politics."

The shift to emergency remote teaching and learning in 2020 might have increased the availability of guidance for online engagement; however, it has not increased the time or resources available to instructors, nor is the overabundance of guidance always helpful. This movement online because of COVID-19 has been referred to as "panic-gogy" in which panic fuels pedagogy (Kamenetz, 2020), and we should be cautious in comparing online education and emergency remote learning. Charles Hodges and colleagues (2020) describe emergency remote teaching as "bare bones" course delivery with limited resources and support, so it is not helpful or accurate to compare this form of delivery with online learning, in which six to nine months are usually dedicated to developing an online course (see also Walsh et al., 2021). Vital, rather, are instructor training and support, resources, and additional time for online learning and emergency remote teaching to create a "robust educational ecosystem" (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 13). Importantly, for disabled students, existing barriers to access have been amplified during the switch to emergency remote learning (Pichette et al., 2020), and connections might be drawn between the exhaustive process of seeking accommodations and faculty exhaustion with emergency remote learning, but it is difficult to know whether these lessons will inform university policies moving forward.

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Conclusion

To consider how disability generativity disrupts online teaching and learning, we reflect on how neo-liberal logics are sustained through online learning and how, simultaneously, bodymind difference in the realm of online social work education crips and expands our understanding of online teaching and learning. As la paperson (2017, p. xiii) suggests, the university is an assemblage that is "always being subverted." Online disabled students are embodied and translated; they are enmeshed and entangled in the neo-liberal-ableist university, desiring to be a part of the university and subverting it all at once. Disabled students in online settings both maintain and crip the university. Although this dynamic might leave us unsettled, it offers space for rest, balance, invisibility and/or visibility, translated embodiment, subversion, and all of the other ways in which online disabled students are cripping and surviving the neo-liberal-ableist institution that is the university.

Through centring the experiences of disabled students online—such as in Chapter 8 of this book—we can begin to crip online education. As Goodley and colleagues (2014, p. 982) note, disabled people's "interdependencies provide alternative ethical maps for living together outside of, even in opposition to, the dictates of normalcy." In this way, disability politics and crip theory make space for us to rethink and reimagine how to live through neo-liberal ableism. One way to begin cripping the university is to start with the micro-political actions, ranging from petitions to student-led organizations, already being undertaken by mad and disabled students challenging the sanism and ableism inherent in the university (Shanouda, 2019). In online educational spaces, micro-activisms—which have inherent markers of Ami Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch's (2019) crip technoscience—can range from mobilizing via Twitter chats, such as with Hsieh and Saleh's Twitter sisterhood (2021), to course-based private Facebook groups. In emergency remote learning, learners have continued to use technology to subvert institutional norms through similar Facebook groups (Bozkurt, 2021), actions such as claiming unstable internet access and even changing a Zoom name to "reconnecting . . ." to keep their cameras off or creating a pretense of audio issues by silently miming speaking.

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These types of micro-activisms unsettle taken-for-granted institutional norms in which students control, even for brief periods, their translation in online spaces (Rudnicki, 2017).

Questions of embodiment in online spaces are not easily resolved, nor should they be, as Jessica Vorstermans and Elizabeth Mohler highlight in the last chapter of this volume. However, by employing crip theory that understands "disability" as both an identification and an action term that references a multiplicity of bodymind differences and is simultaneously affirmed and contested, shifting and ever changing (Chen et al., 2023; McRuer, 2018), we can begin to theorize this unsettled and unsettling terrain. This framing involves attending to differences rather than smoothing them over through resolving the dilemma and gestures toward the need to dwell with embodied yet translated online learning.

Notes

1 The term "bodymind" acknowledges the intertwined connections between our bodies and our minds and how an ideology of "cure" suggests that the body and mind are separate, "the mind superior to the body, the mind defining personhood" (Clare, 2020, p. xvi).

2 Emergency remote education refers to courses delivered virtually with students participating in the course without coming to a campus (see Bozkurt, 2021; Hodges et al., 2020). This is viewed as a temporary solution, during a crisis, for classes designed for and intended to be delivered in the face-to-face classroom. Remote courses can use asynchronous or synchronous (real-time) strategies or a combination of them. In contrast, online education refers to courses specifically designed for digital delivery and facilitation. Online courses are intentional, fully online, and intended to be virtual spaces where a variety of digital teaching and learning strategies are employed using a range of learning management platforms.

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5 Ethical Challenges of Digital Technology and the Utah Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

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> *The modern smartphone provides access to incredibly important and uplifting information, including family history and the holy scriptures. On the other hand, it contains foolishness, immorality, and evil not readily available in the past.*
>
> —Quentin L. Cook (2019)

"Digital native" is both myth and reality (Selwyn, 2009). Essentially, descriptions of digital technology acumen vary because there are far too many wide-ranging factors that dictate digital technology knowledge and use. Higher education students are often assumed to be digital natives. Applications are online, federal student aid forms are online, an increasing number of courses can be taken online, and entire degrees can be earned online. Naturally, access to digital technology is assumed and, to a degree, expected. However, long-gestating socio-economic barriers, inclusive of race and gender, affect such access; although in this chapter we do not seek to delve into those well-documented impediments to access, we do seek to unpack one of the under-discussed facets of access to digital technology: religion.

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We explore a series of conflicts related to digital technology that we witness regularly in our pre-core writing class at Utah Valley University (UVU), a regional, open-enrolment institution in Utah. The first conflict stems from the cultural environment in Utah, one of religious conservatism, with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) influencing culture, behaviour, social structure, and even laws. As is likely the case with many religions, there is a tenuous relationship with the internet. High-ranking individuals in the LDS Church demonstrate the cultural conflict with technology: digital devices and the internet are tools that they can use to expand the missionary work of the church; however, according to the church website , "caution must be exercised in order to protect families and individuals from the potential dangers that are present online" (LDS Family Services, n.d.). Although internet use increased during COVID-19 (which we describe toward the end of this chapter), it does not seem to have changed the cultural conflict.

The second conflict arises because of the nature of the university: we are growing much faster than our space really allows, so it is one reason that there has been a push toward offering more hybrid and online classes, though convenience for students is as equal a priority for providing them. The COVID-19 pandemic sped up this existing push for "flexible" course delivery options. These courses require students to do all of their work with the technologies and online spaces that have the potential dangers discussed by the church, specifically mentioned in a variety of its communicative platforms (which we discuss in the later sections of this chapter).

The third conflict arises because many of our students are working adults with children. They end up taking online and hybrid classes because of their schedules, or they take online and hybrid courses in order to make long commutes less often. Therefore, many students take online and hybrid classes not because they are comfortable with the technologies but because they are the only classes that work in their lives, as revealed by Felicita Arzu-Carmichael in Chapter 2 of this volume. Thus, we would be remiss in our duties as educators and in our responsibilities in higher education if we did not at least have conversations about digital

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technology platforms that students might one day use in their academic, personal, and professional lives.

We explore this three-pronged conflict alongside survey data from students that provide their perspectives on these issues. As outsiders to Utah and the LDS religion and culture, we were rather unprepared for these potential barriers. Ultimately, in this chapter, we address how conservative, religious culture must be considered in conversations of access and technology. We pay particular attention to the use of social media, YouTube, and other such platforms as components of course work because they are the spaces of most concern for students. Their use is often advocated as a way to engage students in course work, but this can force them into a difficult situation that leads to the opposite results.

What We Have Experienced (Our Narratives)

We are outsiders. We are women of colour. Neither of us is of the dominant LDS religion. We find this information important to state because our outsider status can compound or exacerbate existing conflicts gleaned from both our anecdotal experiences and survey responses. Our status is amplified not only by our religious and visual differences but also by our educational experiences at institutions wholly diverse from where we currently teach.

> *Garcia*: Before I began working at UVU in 2013, I did my graduate work and teaching assistantships at large, research-intensive universities where the students I taught brought their digital technologies to class each day and were familiar with the programs necessary for a writing class. Nearly all of my students also lived in dorms that had computer labs for those who did not already own the tech that they needed. Suffice it to say that I was taken aback or shocked—or just plain confused—the first time that I heard a UVU student say, "I couldn't finish my homework last night because my parents wouldn't let me use the computer." Other students have said that their parents put time limits on their computer use, often being just an hour or two a day. Still other students have said that they have to share the family computer with their siblings, so their time on it was limited.

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There are a few specific issues here: students are living at home, sometimes far from the campus; their families do not know, understand, or care that most academic work is done online; and some students do not know about or will not go to libraries or other areas that provide computers on which they could work. Typically, they are younger students coming from high school, where most likely they did their online/computer work at school and their paper-based work at home. I have seen this situation create conflicts in students between what their parents require and what I require.

Johnson: None of the institutions that I have taught at or attended are research intensive institutions, including UVU. However, I taught in "smart" classrooms (those equipped with desktops for students' use and a "master" computer for instructors' use), or students brought their digital technologies to class each day. No matter the institution, many assignments were multi-modal, and all assignments were submitted digitally. Although most, if not all, students were knowledgeable and often made use of various word-processing platforms, there were rare instances of unfamiliarity with such platforms. Furthermore, when faculty encountered instances when digital technology platforms were unfamiliar, graduate teaching assistants conducted workshops specifically on those unfamiliar platforms. Any conflict about access that arose was largely the result of socio-economic status, not religious or parental control.

Description of Utah and Our Students

Utah is Mormon majority, white, and not a wealthy state. Although data sources differ in the exact percentage of the population who are LDS, it ranges from about one-third to one-half of adults (Canham, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). According to an article in the *Salt Lake City Tribune* in 2017, in Utah County, where UVU is located, 84.7% of the population are LDS (Canham, 2017). This is significant because, according to UVU's Institutional Research (2020), 59.4% of the student population are from Utah County. Additionally, again according to UVU's own research, 72% of students are LDS. We are considering the community's culture

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because it affects the university. Married or partnered students make up 39% of the student body, and 17% of those students have children. Such information is meaningful and reflects what we hear from the students who end up registering for online sections of required courses. Furthermore, over 50% of the student population work 21 or more hours a week, and over 25% work 31 or more hours a week, yet another reason perhaps that students take online sections since there is little time during the day or evening to be in classrooms. Arzu-Carmichael thoroughly explains in Chapter 2 the ways that "online education is often understood as education for mostly non-traditional students" perceived to live complicated lives. Although many of our online students could be described in such ways, like Arzu-Carmichael, we recognize that many of them lack the institutional support that they need.

Of additional importance is that three-quarters of UVU students make less than $20,000 a year, and one in three comes from a household that makes less than $20,000. Although income might not directly affect taking online courses, it likely does affect access to digital technology. It is common knowledge that income disparity affects access to digital technology. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, "The Digital Divide" or "Digital Difference" is a summation of the difference in internet use based on family income. For a family whose income is $30,000 a year or lower, 24% of teens (the study focused on teens, but since many of our students still live at home, the data is relevant) said "the lack of dependable computer or internet connection often or sometimes prohibited them from finishing their homework," but for families whose income is $75,000 or more, only 9% reported trouble finishing online homework (Schaeffer, 2021). Taking into account the student demographics of UVU—with more than half of the student population making less than $30,000 a year—internet use among our students is indeed a major concern.

Conflicts

The conflicts regarding digital technologies have three main players, with a variety of interconnected perspectives: the LDS Church, Utah Valley University (faculty, staff, administration) and the students attending UVU.

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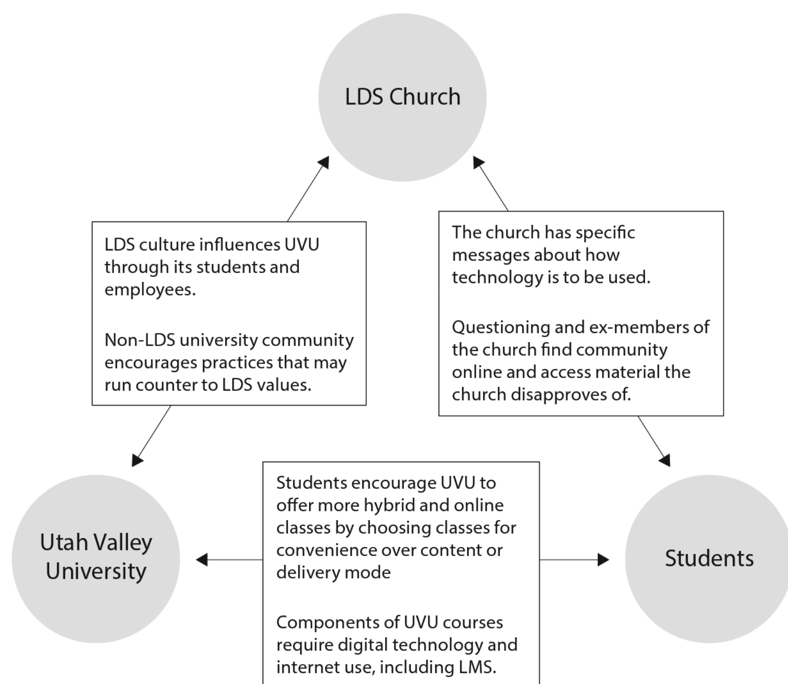

Figure 2. *The relationships between the LDS Church, students, and Utah Valley University.*

We have created the image above as a representation of the ways each of these three players influence each other.

Students and the Church

The LDS Church and the internet have a complicated relationship. The church has a main website, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (churchofjesuschrist.org), and several social media sites. On the website, within the "Official Social Media Accounts for Church Leaders and Groups" page, the church notes that, "as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, we have been given the mandate to share God's light and truth with those around us. Social Media platforms give us a unique opportunity to flood the earth with positive thoughts, imagery, and messages" (*Church of Jesus Christ,* 2024, July 30). Obviously, there is

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no denying the ubiquity of social media. In addition, all of the social media pages contain the same information as the main website, maintaining a strong and consistent message.

Something to highlight on the website's "Scriptures and Study" page is the church's General Conference, a worldwide gathering of church members. These gatherings essentially provide more firm guidance on how to be an LDS member. Such information is then reiterated on websites and social media platforms. Here we focus on the General Conference of 2019 because of its emphasis on internet use. The speech entitled "Be Faithful, not Faithless" (Owen, 2019) began with an anecdote about distractions facilitated by the internet. The speech focused on church support for gaining "spiritual nourishment" by being faithful. The speech did not linger on the internet—it was a way into the larger concept of being Mormon—but it did open with the dangers of the internet. Peter M. Johnson (2019), in "Power to Overcome the Adversary," reiterated the concept of distraction with specific attention to the social media platforms Twitter and Facebook and even virtual reality games. But, similar to the other messages, there was a "warning": "These technological advances are amazing, but if we are not careful, they can distract us from fulfilling our divine potential" (Johnson, 2019). Now, to be clear, the three speeches mentioned (the two here and the speech by Cook quoted at the beginning of this chapter) were among 35 speeches for the October 2019 General Conference, so we cannot and do not argue that there was a concerted effort to exhort turning away from the internet; however, none of the messages were without a caveat about internet use.

Even before the General Conference in October 2019, pages of the church's magazines, and *Ensign* (2020), were littered with information on "Positive Uses for the Internet," "Tips for Internet Safety," and "Fighting Internet Filth." Regardless of the overall content, the underlying messages in these speeches and articles is that, though the internet can be spiritually dangerous, it is also for reaffirming faith as long as messages are filtered through the church.

The church makes use of the internet as a means to educate and "recruit," and, though our institution uses the internet for similar or even the same purposes, students are in a precarious position. We ask and even require

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them to make use of sites not filtered through the church. Canvas, UVU's learning management system (LMS), has some hurdles for students who are not savvy in digital technology, but as the university LMS it is an educational necessity. Although we could rely on Canvas as the lone mode of digital technology for all students in our courses, we would be remiss in our duties as teachers, specifically literacy teachers, in not incorporating additional digital technology platforms in our classrooms. For example, the name of our department is Literacies and Composition, and we include digital literacies as part of our instructional focus. In addition to requiring students to use Google Drive components to compose and share assignments, we ask them to use YouTube, and some faculty incorporate social media platforms to discuss the audience as part of our focus on rhetoric. Our incorporation of YouTube is pedagogical, so we initiate the facilitation of students' ability to conduct a Stuart Selber humanistic critique of digital literacy, a blending of functional, critical, and rhetorical concerns toward a more well-rounded comprehension, critique, and use of digital technologies.

To ascertain how our students use and feel about digital technology, including the internet and social media, we obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to distribute a survey in the spring and summer of 2019. Our findings both shore up and at times contradict our presumptions of students' digital technology use and knowledge. Our survey contained 12 questions. All questions were open ended. The survey was disseminated via a link to Qualtrics to 90 students within the first two weeks of each semester. The questions ranged from which digital technology platforms students used or had knowledge of before taking any courses with UVU to their comfort in using digital technology platforms. Numerous social media platforms—including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook—were specifically mentioned more than once, and terms and phrases such as "inappropriate," "toxic place," "inappropriate platforms because it's not right," "too political," and "too much drama" were all stated as reasons in response to the question "Are there any digital technologies or platforms you actively avoid using and why?" Unsurprisingly, these responses echo descriptions of social media from the LDS Church.

It is also not surprising that students mention YouTube. We find YouTube essential in the facilitation of our courses as visual aids for

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instruction on the audience or in providing essential foundational work on comprehending rhetorical appeals. In such endeavours, we do understand that the algorithm presents certain obstacles to our efforts to provide necessary instruction while not infringing the dominant religion of our student population. For example, in facilitating comprehension of definitions of rhetorical appeal using YouTube, we came across various Latter-Day Saints influencers who promote Mormonism, but in the same searches we came upon ex-Mormon channels that also directed us to several influencers questioning Mormonism and ex-Mormon websites outside YouTube.

Numerous websites created by and content driven by former Mormons exist to extol the problematic nature of Mormonism. For example, *Mormon Stories* is a site that still reinforces Mormonism, but it appears to focus on more liberal or progressive Mormons; interestingly, it still provides a pathway toward becoming ex-Mormon. The prolific podcast *The How-To Heretic* addresses being ex-Mormon or living a post-Mormon life, such as keeping Mormon friends or being ostracized, dealing with Mormon family members, et cetera. We also found *r/exmormon*, "The Best Exmormon Forum on the Internet!" on Reddit. The site is "a forum for ex-mormons and others who have been affected by Mormonism to share news, commentary, and comedy about the Mormon church." The site appears to be a place both to make fun of Mormonism and to learn how to be ex-Mormon. Some of the information even condemns religion in general. Much of the information comes out of or is directed to Utah, and the content seems to express some people's deep feelings of anger at being lied to or used during their time with the LDS Church.

These sites are not all of the sites that we found while using YouTube to provide more support in explaining rhetorical concepts. We surmise that these sites are considered "inappropriate" or "toxic" platforms that some of our students actively avoid. Furthermore, these sites are the most immediate, the most content specific, and the most active in online communities of individuals "questioning" their belonging to the church.

We understand that we have choices. We can surely choose not to incorporate YouTube or any social media platform into our courses. As a matter of fact, some of our colleagues have chosen just that: they have made a point of purposefully avoiding social media in their courses. In

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the summer of 2020, the university began requiring instructors to take workshops on the increased utilization of Canvas to deliver course instruction fully because of the COVID-19 pandemic. During that workshop, more than a handful of instructors in various disciplines specifically stated that they avoided incorporating social media into their courses. They cited many of the same reasons that our survey students cited. This is not surprising since our faculty demographics are very similar to our students. But a recent *Money* article states that "social media manager is one of the most highly sought positions out there" (Rainbow, 2020) and makes a clear case for the need of higher education to at least pay attention to social media as an integral part of digital technologies. Although we are not necessarily advocating an increased use of social media, we do acknowledge that such platforms have a place and that there is space for their use in our courses.

Students and the University

Over the past several years, our institution has been working to understand the decision-making practices of students for courses, schedules, and preferred modes of delivery. A university-wide committee—Re-Envisioning the Undergraduate Experience—conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with students in an attempt to discern the primary problems that the committee could address. The data gathered revealed that course scheduling is the primary factor in choosing a class, particularly with general education courses. Rather than choosing classes that they might enjoy most, students chose classes that worked best for their schedules. Therefore, the institution has been working to revise its approach to scheduling courses. Part of this work has focused on ensuring that students have courses available when they need them and that courses are scheduled at times with the most demand for them, work being done by the University and College Flexible Learning Councils. In addition, the institution intends to make schedules more convenient for working students and students with families. UVU, then, seems to be trying to address the many issues of access described in other chapters in this collection (notably Chapters 2, 3, and 10).

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Another component driving our institution's scheduling revisions is space, or more accurately a lack thereof, not necessarily a student success motivation. Our institution is constantly growing, and we cannot pay for or build quickly enough to meet the demands for space that come with face-to-face classes. Therefore, departments are being encouraged to offer more of their courses in hybrid or online modes of delivery. Although this push started several years ago, it was not until our new president arrived that it became a mandate. Here is an interesting example. A few years ago our then senior vice president of academic affairs sent messages during the finals week of each semester demanding that faculty be with their students at their assigned finals time, even if students would not be taking a final exam then. In our department, we do not hold final exams and instead create finals completed over time and submitted online; there was absolutely no need to meet at a specific final exam location and time. Now, just a few years later, our new provost has sent similar messages just before finals week indicating that, if we are not holding a final exam, then we do not need to meet with our students in a classroom. Although we would like to say that this change was inspired by pedagogy only, we cannot; it is because of space. Our institution simply does not have enough classrooms available for every class to meet in person that week.

Prior to COVID-19, our institution did not offer enough online courses or meet the demand for them from students. Nor did it offer enough online courses in the view of our new president, recently a Microsoft executive. She was shocked at the lack (in her eyes) of technology use at our university. She and the Provost's Office of Academic Affairs started pushing programs to offer fully online degrees rather than just a smattering of online courses (UVU, n.d., 2020).

The president's push for greater use of digital technologies affects more than online course offerings. She and others interested in a more "green" campus encourage that all documents used for meetings and most documents used for classes be posted online rather than printed. One of her major initiatives was to create Digital Transformation, "the process of applying technology to fundamentally change how organizations operate and provide value to those served" (UVU, 2020). Our department has taken up this push toward greater use of digital technologies not

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only in our course practices (many of our faculty do not use any printed documents in their classes) but also in two of our core competencies to emphasize over the next five years: Composing for Digital Contexts and Information Literacy and Technology. As a department, we are trying to keep up with the demands from the institution and the local employers that hire many of our university's graduates as well as trying to adjust our approaches in anticipation of rather than in response to institutional expectations. Therefore, our students, to achieve academic and professional success, have to function within that context.

Our concern, and part of the exigency of our research on the conflicts surrounding online and digital technologies, are that we cannot assume that our students will be familiar and comfortable with the kinds of digital technologies that we are using, even if they are using their own digital technologies (smartphones) regularly. We are asking them to do different tasks and use different software and even different mechanical skills than those with which they might be familiar. The institution, in its call for an expansion of hybrid and online courses, does not appear (to us) to be paying enough attention to the kinds of inequities in and opportunities for co-creation described by other authors in this volume. We both have had students who struggle to turn on a lab computer or do not know how to use a keyboard or cannot quite figure out Canvas. But how do we help students through the digital struggles that they might be experiencing when the course is online? How do we help them with their problems within a medium that itself is the cause of their problems?

Online teaching and increased technology use in classes that might meet in part or in whole in person often bring expectations of using a multitude of online materials. However, when students carefully avoid falling into internet rabbit holes for fear of coming across an inappropriate and/or unwanted site, some of the affordances offered by the internet are nullified. This is part of our conundrum in how to mitigate an unexpected constraint of incorporating internet use in our courses. Thus, unintentionally, we exacerbate an already tenuous relationship that our students have with digital technologies that can affect how they perceive us, as their instructors, the courses that we teach, and even the university.

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Impact of COVID-19

Some of the issues described above became even more visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, not a surprise given some of the problems with teaching online explained well by Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris in Chapter 3 of this volume. Interestingly, new conflicts arose surrounding the use of digital technologies and online courses. We describe some of our observations below.

The LDS Church and COVID-19

The LDS Church was rather cautious in dealing with COVID-19 (Walch, 2020). Nearly all face-to-face services were cancelled or paused (*LDS 365*, 2020; Rowan, 2020; Walch, 2020), and international missionaries were reassigned to their home countries (Newsroom, 2020a, 2020b; Fabbi, 2020), though they continued their missionary work rather than self-isolating at home, after an initial quarantine period of 14 days (Newsroom, 2020c). Even the spring and fall 2020 General Conferences, each of which "usually attracts more than 100,000 people" to Salt Lake City, were moved entirely online (Rowan, 2020). In the spring of 2021, the church still ran a virtual General Conference.

During the pandemic, the church utilized and encouraged the use of online technologies to continue its work while its members maintained self-isolation and social distancing. In April 2020, clear policies were established for how to conduct the work of the church online, such as leadership meetings, General Conferences, interviews, classes, funerals, weddings, and baptismal services. New, overarching technology use guidelines were also created (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2020d). Missionary work evolved into a strong online presence. Kami Withers, a missionary, described the evolution of the work online in a video: "It's been really interesting to see how people are responding to that [online missionary work] versus how it was before where we knock on doors for like four hours a day and maybe get one person that lets us in. Here we post something, and people are actually coming to us" (Fabbi, 2020). The church continued finding ways to ensure that members could participate in church

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services through virtual or very small gatherings (e.g., the sacrament being administered in homes when individuals could not attend larger group sessions) (Newsroom, 2022).

Taking all of this information regarding the LDS Church's stance on the use of technology, it seems that the response to COVID-19 created an even greater belief that online work is highly valuable in maintaining the participation of its members. It will be interesting to see whether this approach to conducting church work will continue strongly in the coming years since LDS members are now accustomed to online participation to a much greater extent than they were before. Despite this adjustment, there was still a cry from Elder David A. Bednar (of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints): "While believers and their religious organizations must be good citizens . . . never again can we allow government officials to treat the exercise of religion as simply nonessential" (Newsroom, 2020d). Elder Bednar held the belief that being together online does not quite qualify as "gathering" and was part of the disruption of religious freedom, as he saw it.

The Utah State Government versus UVU

There was also an interesting shift during the COVID-19 pandemic from feeling pressure from the LDS Church to feeling pressure from the state government. UVU followed the Utah system of higher education's guidelines for phased returns to campus. These guidelines, though, were aligned with the state's categorizations of risk. In Utah, that means a government that is predominantly Republican and LDS. So the way that many employees saw it was that our university followed the Republican approach to COVID-19, thus making our health and safety a political issue. Unfortunately, this played out in such a way "that the health of the state's business was prioritized over the health of the public, as officials stopped slowing the spread of the virus and instead calculated how many sick people its health system could bear" (Song, 2020). Utah mirrored, in many ways, the national approach to COVID-19, with health officials steadily pushed away from the decision-making arena.

Multiple task forces and committees were created, of course, and they were given "a broad mandate to steer Utah's response to the COVID-19

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pandemic" (Dudley, 2020). Based on recommendations from these committees, Utah initiated "one of the more aggressive reopening timelines" (Dudley, 2020). Although COVID-19 case numbers were at the lower end by mid-May 2020, this "aggressive reopening" approach led to the highest numbers of cases and deaths in early to mid-July 2020 (Utah Division of Emergency Management, 2020). In late summer 2020, given the rising numbers of cases and deaths since the relaxed restrictions, Governor Gary Herbert issued Utah's mask mandate (Utah Division of Emergency Management, 2020).

When the mandate was announced, both Salt Lake City (in Salt Lake County) and Provo (in Utah County, where UVU is also located) held rallies at which parents protested wearing masks and demanded in-person classes. These protesters crowded into small rooms without wearing masks (Tanner, 2020). Unsurprisingly, to those familiar with the Utah cultural and political climate, "the biggest difference [between Salt Lake City and Provo protesters] is the families pushing to return [to schools in person] in Salt Lake City are willing to send their kids back in masks to make it happen. At the larger and louder rally in the more conservative Utah County, not wearing [masks] was the point" (Tanner, 2020). Despite the pressure of the above external climate, greater educational conflicts arose because of the move online at UVU: students—administration—faculty. The central issue at play was whether the work of the university could be conducted effectively online.

Students versus UVU

In late spring 2020, UVU sent out a survey to students focused on their satisfaction with the newly remote courses. For many faculty at UVU, it was probably unsurprising that 63% of students surveyed professed that they were less satisfied with newly transitioned remote/online classes than they were with their face-to-face classes. Although faculty were not privy to the survey questions or any subsequent surveys, this statistic was utilized and shared by multiple individuals and various university departments. Through late spring 2020, we could not seem to get away from that 63% despite the recognition that, of course, the remote versions of courses thrown together over UVU's spring break would be less desired than the

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carefully constructed original versions of those courses. Yet we saw the persistence of that 63% statistic used to push employees back onto the campus because of the palpable fear that enrolment would drop substantially in fall 2020 unless face-to-face courses were offered. Interestingly, enrolment in the fall did not take an expected hit, and instead UVU took enrolment hits in the spring and fall of 2021. In our own department, there was a scramble to justify faculty reassigned time because we were able to offer so few sections given the low registration numbers. Throughout the subsequent fall and spring semesters, to the intense frustration of many faculty, face-to-face attendance was extremely low, with many students opting to attend the classes virtually (UVU took the approach that half of the students would attend a class period face-to-face while the other half would attend it virtually; they would switch back and forth throughout each week).

Other conflicts arose over students' access to technology. Some students struggled to complete their work remotely. Even though a few computer labs on campus remained open throughout the worst parts of the crisis, a public computer lab was not an option for many students who couldn't work on campus but had relied on campus computers. Without the ability to use campus computers, students resorted to using their smartphones. Although they were better than nothing for completing academic assignments, smartphones were still challenging. Under tough circumstances, UVU tried to ensure that as many students as possible had appropriate computer access. Our IT office quickly ordered 300 laptops for students to borrow, and Student Affairs informed students that they could request funds to pay for services. The university also set up a system by which students could gain remote access to computer labs by requesting virtual private network access. It would enable them to use software installed on the lab computers from their own systems (Safety/Emergency Management, 2020).

By fall 2021, though, students (and the State of Utah as a whole) seemed to persist with a "getting back to normal" mentality, desiring face-to-face courses over online live-streaming or asynchronous courses. Despite the likelihood that many would be unvaccinated, they were also interacting in the public spaces on campus by not wearing masks. In fact, in Utah County, only 48.3% of residents were fully vaccinated by the end of

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October (Utah Government, 2021). UVU announced a vaccine mandate for 2022, though it was easy for students to receive an exemption because of medical, religious, or personal reasons. We suspect that the flexibility of this "mandate" was established because the university did not want to risk even lower enrolment.

Administration versus Faculty and Staff

Much of the early conflict at UVU during COVID-19 was internal, for different perceptions, health issues, political leanings, needs, and focuses led to disagreements. When COVID-19 hit the United States and Utah hard in March 2020, many of us at UVU were caught off guard. And an extremely hectic and stressful six weeks began. In the first week and a half, we received messages from the Provost's Office regarding expectations of faculty, a steady stream of resources and training from the Office of Teaching and Learning, LinkedIn training and other "challenges" for us to complete from Human Resources, and stress-laden communications from departmental chairs and deans. Opening our email inboxes became much more of a chore, and we both became quickly overwhelmed. Ultimately, we ignored many of these messages because it was just too much to process. We imagine that students' experiences of the same time were also challenging given the course modality changes and the barrage of communications from both the university and instructors.

When it neared time to assign course sections to faculty for the fall, our department started receiving updates from our chair that contained conflicting information. We would be teaching remotely; then only those of us at risk medically (identified by providing medical information to HR) would be teaching remotely; then we were encouraged to teach remotely and online. Just over a week later, though, Academic Affairs and the Provost's Office switched gears. We felt like we were on a swivel: we had to make quick changes in instruction without any meaningful say in those changes. The shifting messages became very frustrating, no matter how understandable the uncertainty was. Additionally, some faculty were apprehensive about face-to-face teaching because of our own health issues and the likelihood of student conflicts in the classroom with consistent mask wearing and social distancing. Previously mentioned

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low enrolment was evidence that students wanted face-to-face classes, so Academic Affairs urged departments to offer at least 25% of their classes as face-to-face or face-to-face/hybrid. Suddenly, faculty who wanted to avoid the campus were being pressured. It started to feel as if our administration was more concerned about enrolment than employee and student safety.

By following the directives of the state government, including the Utah system of higher education, UVU's administration appeared to be aligning the institution with the Republican approach to COVID-19 (Meyer & Ebmeyer, 2020; Vaught, 2020), which risked the reopening of the university becoming a political issue rather than one of safety and health. By spring 2021, though, the tune changed a bit. There was talk of creating more permanent remote working conditions for some employees and keeping a higher number of online courses than we had that first spring. Now that UVU was set up for virtual work and classes, the institution saw solutions to the previous space and parking problems. It was an interesting side effect caused by COVID-19.

Within Utah's conservative environment, UVU struggled to balance the desires and needs of employees with the desires and demands of students and the state government. By fall 2021, some faculty were required to request official accommodations in order to teach virtually because state legislation developed a law demanding that at least 75% of each institution's courses be offered face-to-face. Although it was the Utah state legislature that created this requirement, the conflicts that arose were focused on UVU administration and employees.

Conclusion

We are committed to understanding and explicating various and multiple conflicts affecting both our pedagogy and our students. We remain aware that the myth of the digital native persists in higher education. We also remain aware that there are students who are indeed digital natives as well as digital strangers. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted such descriptors, not only for students, but also for UVU faculty. What is more, the university's vacillation on the types of course delivery required

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a re-examination of our pedagogies, specifically our online pedagogies, and how such changes, in course delivery and content, affect students, a majority of whom must also contend with abiding by the church's messages about digital technology, the increased digital delivery of courses, and the incorporation of digital technology platforms into courses.

As all instructors know, how we facilitate instruction either online or in classrooms is affected directly by educational policies, university guidelines, and individual departmental goals. But the intricacies of that facilitation are a matter of pedagogy and, in our case, the additional condition of working at a public, open admissions, Mormon-dominated institution. We are not guided by the church, but our visible and invisible positionalities as outsiders do guide our pedagogy, which, in our department, includes the incorporation of digital technologies into both how to complete assignments and the submission of those assignments. We understand how our choice to incorporate digital technology into our curriculum might sometimes be in contrast to the guidance of the church, but it is our goal at least to introduce students to digital technology platforms, and we would be remiss if we did not do so. We know that various digital technology platforms are vital, not only in higher education, but also in our students' professional endeavours. We are earnest in our attentiveness to the various pedagogical needs of our students, even when those needs might invite conflict. Unfortunately, it makes the kind of co-creation described by Vorstermans and Mohler in Chapter 10 of this volume even more difficult. However, though conflicts are many and equally problematic, conflict has never been a reason for educators to turn away from practices that ultimately benefit students long after their time in our courses.

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6 Poetic Journeys

College Students with Disabilities Navigating Unanticipated Transitions during the Pandemic

Mina Chun

Gaining a complete picture of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting the lives of college students with disabilities, instead of assuming or imagining their experiences, is critical for colleges and universities interested in supporting the needs of such students in a post-pandemic world. This chapter centres the insider voices of two college students with disabilities and validates their emotional experiences as knowledge (Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020) by utilizing a poetic inquiry and participatory approach. In this way, authentic college experiences of and perspectives on navigating the abrupt, unanticipated transitions during the pandemic are revealed.

The authentic insider perspectives on and interpretations of the pandemic experiences of two American-based college students who identified with disabilities were synthesized using poetic inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010) as participant-voiced poetry, also known as found poetry (Prendergast, 2009). The found poetry below emphasizes the significance of emergency remote education during the pandemic for two college students, "Kathie" and "Kendall." To be respectful of the privacy of the participants, any of their confidential information is not shared, and pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter.

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Kathie and Kendall attended the same liberal arts university. Kathie was a freshman, and Kendall was a sophomore. They received support from the disability services office. In addition to that support, Kathie had a private tutor who could help her with specific courses. Both were out-of-state students who lived on campus and did not have any family members living near the university.

This study began in fall 2020 and ended in early spring 2021. At the time, the university had strict COVID-19 restrictions with limited in-person gathering; thus, the entire process was completed virtually, including our method of collaborative poetry writing. At the beginning of the study, I discussed the research project virtually with Kathie and Kendall, and they agreed to participate and signed the Institutional Review Board-approved informed consent form. Over five months, Kathie and Kendall individually wrote four reflective journals about their experiences and engaged virtually in dialogue with me four times, after each journal was complete. With the completed journals, we began to co-construct found poems by organizing the journals into themes. Through the collaborative co-writing process via virtual meetings between each college student and me, the poems were "found" by directly drawing Kathie's and Kendall's own words and phrases from their reflective journals and changing spacing and lines (Galvin & Prendergast, 2016; Prendergast, 2009). This participatory approach allowed active collaboration with Kathie and Kendall in every step of the study (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Sohng, 2005), including collaboratively co-constructing found poems (Manning, 2018).

The found poems are intended to communicate authentic and affective experiences of Kathie and Kendall during the pandemic by focusing solely on their voices. These poems are organized under each student's name.

Kathie

A Shift in Learning Style

As a profoundly dyslexic learner,
I use all the resources I can,
especially the teachers.
I need teacher interaction to learn.

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I learn by
seeing and doing
asking questions
staying after class with the teacher for help.

My hardest class was *completely* online.
NO HUMAN TEACHERS!
Never saw the teacher.
Read the assigned chapters.
Completed the assignments.
Took the tests.
This was beyond terrifying.
I asked the professor for a virtual meeting
they answered . . .
. . . through an email.
NO HUMAN TEACHERS!

Some professors were accommodating:
Extra time
Concerned
Personable
Available for virtual meetings.
But
Kept getting a *zero*
even after doing the work correctly
by submitting the work
in the wrong format.

Work coming in from every direction.
Checking so many different platforms.
Submitting work in numerous formats
for each class.
It is so easy to submit the wrong format.

It is *impossible* to keep it all straight.
Even the teachers confuse themselves.
Not good!

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Chaos.
Anxiety.
Frustration.

A Surprise Ending for Me

COVID school is different,
But I figured out
how to make the new system work for me.
COVID has created a learning environment
that actually suits me.

Quite honestly,
it is probably *better* for me.
Dare I say:
I "like" taking classes in the COVID era.
I watch lectures when I want
I rewatch when I don't understand
I take as much time as I need
I write essays at my own pace
I look at my notes
I research in my textbooks
I even consult search engines during tests

Everyone else is getting
the *same* accommodations as me.
I don't feel different.
I am *not* forced
to push my square learning style
into a round hole.

Require Professors to Conform

Very strongly REQUIRE professors to use
Same online platform
Same delivery of material

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Same format of submission.
Students should not have to
check numerous locations,
scramble to download new applications,
learn multiple ways to save and turn in work,
much less try to remember,
which professor wants it which way.
Pick a single platform!

Force all professors to learn to use
ONE online delivery and acceptance system!
Another simple request:
a book available for students!

Due to my dyslexia,
the words in e-books swim by on the computer screen.
I still need a physical book
to read and write in
Highlight
Outline
Make notes
Circle
Underline
Place sticky notes
Flip back.
A book to touch—is that too much to ask for?
There is no way
students with disabilities are the *only* ones
who need physical books
to manipulate in order to learn.
Impossible!

I have more worries and academic anxiety
now than ever
about my classes.
I don't know

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if I am capable of taking a test
the old-fashioned traditional way!
Studying, learning, and walking
into a classroom to take a test.
I'm not prepared for that
anymore.
Don't change it back now.
I'm afraid.
I've already adapted.

Kendall

Adjusting to COVID University

As a sophomore in college
with disabilities
in the pandemic
things are more stressful and overwhelming.

In all honesty,
I was really nervous to start
A new semester
A new adviser
New classes
All in the middle of the pandemic.

The semester was *really* confusing and different.
One hybrid class.
Two in-person classes.
Two asynchronous online classes.
Two synchronous online classes.
The semester was chaotic.
Mentally exhausting!

It was very weird,
having classes in my bedroom,
seeing myself in the corner of my screen.
Everything felt very fake and surreal.

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The pandemic definitely made things worse
and held me back.
Mentally and physically.
Made school harder.

More about Me

COVID-19 made me realize
more about myself,
What I need,
What I want to do,
What I'd like to pursue
in my academic career,
How reluctant I am to ask for help.
It is a mixture of embarrassment
and pride.

Meetings with
Disability Resources staff
once a week
My academic adviser
every two weeks
Check-in
Checkups
Reassurance
Work on time management
Make a schedule
Keep me organized!
It is okay to need
help, support, and
guidance.

I miss in-person classes,
But I like the class set up now.
My schedule is fairly organized.
Hybrid
Online

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Hyflex
No classes on Tuesdays,
a free day to do work and read.
Really beneficial!
Flexible and helpful
in maneuvering through everything.
It's pretty cool.

Be Supportive!

Students should not have to do
more during a pandemic.
Students should not only strictly depend
on themselves.
Support students to still meet and spend time
with one another.
Give them options!
Host programs
Fun and educational programs
Virtually or socially distant
Necessary precautions should be taken.
Virtual options should be
more accessible,
more comfortable.

Students may be aware of resources
on campus and in the community.
They may hesitate utilizing the resources.
Reminders of resources and
Benefits of using them can be helpful.
Some students need *extra* support,
more than others.

We *all* need an *extra* push.
Something small can go a long way.
Check up on students.
Show appreciation to students.

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Send out funny, relatable,
and friendly emails.
Spread joy!

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7 Materializing Access in the Dematerialized Space of Higher Education Online Classrooms

Fiona Cheuk and Esther Ignagni

As several authors in this volume have noted, digital learning was increasingly infused into higher education course design with a wide expansion of virtual components long before the COVID-19 pandemic pushed universities to switch to emergency remote teaching (Collins et al., this volume; Hodges et al., 2020; Reid & Shanouda, this volume). Even courses with physical classroom spaces used components such as online discussion boards, blogs, vlogs, microblogs, and other online media and shared online content such as slides, Google Docs, e-readings, emails, and other digital communications. These tools as well as broader learning management software such as Moodle and Blackboard have now become common. Online learning is attractive to higher education institutions because of its capacity to enhance accessibility to students who face barriers such as geographical location or time commitment and because of its potential to increase student enrolment and demonstrate the university's cutting-edge pedagogical potential (Di Leo, 2020; Power & Gould-Morven, 2011). However, as this volume's editors note, there is a paradox between the promise of access and its actualization in online learning. It is purported that anyone with resources to access the internet ostensibly can access higher education, yet research on both disabled and

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non-disabled students' experiences tells a completely different story about the state of accessibility in online learning (Burgstahler, 2015). As Friesen (2012) notes, "technology is not a destiny, but a scene of struggle."

In this chapter, we draw from our embodied experiences as disabled co-instructors for a long-standing in-person undergraduate course with over 20 years of history at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) facilitating students in a group debate assignment on contentious issues in disability studies in an online course. This course was shifted to its online iteration in 2016, and as such it was intentionally and thoughtfully built through semesters of love and experimentation regarding digital access rather than the forced digital shift of emergency remote teaching in the pandemic (Collins et al., 2020). As Jesse Stommel commented in the interview with Jones and Maloley in Chapter 3, "what happens in a face-to-face class, and what happens in an online course, are fundamentally different [so] that you can't just take what happens in a face-to-face course and neatly pour it into an online class." As an introductory disability studies course, our course was designed to create opportunities for students to use a socio-political framework rather than a traditional medical model to think critically about the meanings of disability. Through our teaching encounters, we hope to offer a complex and messy account of the claim that digital technologies carry with them an ethical renewal of education (Grimaldi & Ball, 2021) by mattering the relationships among body, space, place, L/land(s), and time through our memories.

Digital learning spaces are often presented as dematerialized and disembodied, bodiless and placeless spaces. The irony here is that this account of digital learning seems to depend on the idea that the digital classroom is a space detached from both the bodies of those who would inhabit the space and any barrier to access created by institutional organization of the space, thereby removing the relationship between bodies and spaces and creating the illusion that the digital classroom is barrier free. As Houlden and Veletsianos (2021) note, digital learning is often framed as "anytime anyplace" learning. We argue that such a narrative of the virtual classroom abstracts[1] it from important social, historical, and political relationships that configure meanings of disability and access as they break like waves over the bodies, space, place, and L/land

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involved in teaching. In this chapter, we take up what can be thought of as an expansion of Hamraie's (2018) writing on critical accessibility mapping, and we commit to a social spatial reading of *digital* access in higher education sites. Like Hamraie, we see access as inclusive of intersectionality, cross-disability consciousness, and collective liberation. In this effort, we look at three different sites: emails, Google Docs, and online videos. As is necessary in critical accessibility maps, we "draw on crip theory, as well as humanistic spatial reading methods, to generate intersectional understandings of disability and access" (Hamraie, 2018, p. 268). We collaboratively examine our positionalities as disabled co-instructors as well as the L/land and temporal relations that situate our virtual classroom at TMU.

Materializing the Digital Classroom

Situating the Virtual Classroom at TMU

When reflecting on the material relationships that cross digital space in our online class, we begin from the position that space cannot be detached from its place-based and land-based relationships. As Wayne K. Yang, writing as "la paperson," reminds us, "universities do not exist in some abstract academic place. They are built on land, and especially in the North American context, upon occupied Indigenous lands" (2017, p. 26). Even though virtual space is often imagined as ubiquitously located, being both everywhere and nowhere, the digital classroom and the actions carried out in the course take place somewhere. As Stommel and Morris note in Chapter 3, "the idea of space when you're talking about digital space is complicated. Where does it live? Where does the course live? . . . It isn't just a geographic location; the web is people." To imagine the virtualization of our class as disconnected from its land-based relations as a course offered out of TMU is troubling.

As Nespor (2000, pp. 546–547) argued, the "anonymization of place and settings has both (a) ontological effects, in helping decouple events from specific locations and facilitating their use in certain kinds of theoretical claims, and (b) political implications, in distancing the participants and events described from a public sphere shared with researchers and

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readers." Although her critique of placelessness was about social science research, we contend that these critiques resonate with discounting place in theorizing virtual classrooms. As people learning, teaching, and living on settler-occupied land, we live in relation to settler colonialism through the land and the power relationships that govern how it is imagined, who belongs on it, how to and who can use it, who gets to enter it. The *where* of this class offered out of TMU is the Williams Treaty territory, land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement and the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Peoples and more recently the Mississaugas of the Credit.

In their writing on the significance of acknowledging researchers' and research projects' relationships with land and place in social science research, Tuck and McKenzie (2015, p. 789), citing Rachel Fendler (2013), wrote that ethnographic practices of place making require a double task of understanding how participants signify space through their practices and needing to account for that significance in the ethnography itself since "research creates the space of inquiry, to study it." We find it important to attend to how our teaching-as-research creates the literal space of inquiry: the virtual classroom and the digital platforms that we use to support students in the debate assignment. We argue that claiming placelessness in the virtual classroom and its activities (the debates) disconnects both from key forces that shape them. This is problematic because it would not only contribute to the illusion of "freedom" and "neutrality" already associated with virtual space but also erase the course's place-based connections that influence the debate topics as they align with current disability-related issues enacted in Canadian society.[2]

When the virtual classroom is imagined as placeless, the university's entrenched history of ableism is effectively rendered invisible (Dolmage, 2017). For example, TMU spatially and materially monumentalizes Egerton Ryerson, a figure in Ontario's history of education instrumental in constructing "the problem child" (Knight, 2019) through the exclusion of those who did not fit his idea of "universal education" based on colonial, racist, ableist, and misogynistic interpretations of bodies fit for mass education. This monumentalization recirculates his perception of who

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constitutes a student fit for "normal" education. From its literally elevated position on Gould Street, his figure, till 2021, and all that it stands for loomed over all who traversed the campus. In elevating and celebrating his figure, his ideas about education permeate the campus space as those that TMU deems worthy of celebrating. By reflecting on the land-based and spatial relations of the course, we can connect our classroom's relationship with land through these logics of eugenics that have been used to frame bodies in settler society as inherently undesirable and excludable. Taking Reid and Shanouda's insightful point in Chapter 1 that teaching difficult knowledge necessitates a "care-informed pedagogy" to activate fully a safer classroom space, we argue that attending to the L/land-based relationships of the university classroom allows us to care meaningfully about how our students and our own relationships with colonialism and settler colonialism can affect their learning experience of difficult knowledge such as eugenics as well as how being in a university classroom might feel for them.

In materializing the course's relationships, we are also reminded of Styres and co-authors' (2013) writing about the significance of attending to the difference in using non-capitalized "land" and capitalized "Land" in *Toward a Pedagogy of Land: The Urban Context*:

> We have chosen to capitalize Land when we are referring to it as a proper name indicating a primary relationship rather than when used in a more general sense. For us, land (the more general term) refers to landscapes as a fixed geographical and physical space that includes earth, rocks, and waterways; whereas, "Land" (the proper name) extends beyond a material fixed space. Land is a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships, cultural positioning, and is highly contextualized. (pp. 300–301)

As non-Indigenous disabled people teaching at TMU, located on land currently occupied by a settler society and Indigenous sovereign nations, we contend that both of these meanings of L/land are present in our encounters living, creating, rethinking, and desiring access even though digital space is usually framed as landless and placeless. There is

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simultaneously no land (non-capitalized) beneath us as we teach and land when we think about where our bodies are located as we teach as well as the location of the university from which the course is offered. And this L/land is both physical space and interconnected, interdependent, and highly contextualized. Access in higher education, digital or otherwise, is often discussed in a way that abstracts it from land, Land, and place through the university's framing of disabled people's access as a problem to be negotiated between the individual (students, faculty, or staff) and the institution. We are reminded that access takes place *some where* with *some body*. Here it is useful to take up a critical access approach, one that understands access as "an interpretative between bodies rather than an objective quality" (Hamraie, 2018, p. 456). Questions about who gets access to university classes are also questions about whose bodies are permitted into or excluded from the land through the settler relationships between the institution and the land on which it rests. These relationships organize some bodies and minds into those that fit ableist/sanist/audist/neurotypical expectations of students, faculty, and staff and render others as unexpected. For example, the entry of disabled students is dependent on framing their needs as "extra" through registration at the academic success office, as "retrofits," as Dolmage imagines in the foreword. Their registration is dependent on biocertification (Samuels, 2014) providing invasive (and often expensive) third-party evidence of their identity as "disabled" in order to be validated institutionally. This normalizes the expectation that disabled students will always be excluded until made into an "includable type" when the university provides them with the support necessary to fit its ableist expectations (Titchkosky, 2011, p. 87). In an activist lecture in 2018 organized by the School of Disability Studies at TMU by Jay Dolmage and Nicole Ineese-Nash titled "Legacies of Ableism and Colonialism in Higher Education: Where Do We Go from Here?", Ineese-Nash reminds us of the coloniality behind designing and naturalizing barriers to access in higher education spaces by noting that "colonial education perpetuates disability for those who do not fit the prototype of normative students. In this way it's a colonial process that seeks to impose hierarchies on human subjects." Having the power to determine who accesses a university's spaces when the university is built

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upon stolen land reinforces its power as a colonial institution that currently exists in a settler-colonial society in which its relationship with land is predominantly proprietary. The university can control who is granted access, denied access, or framed as removable when one does not fit the owner's desires.

Situating Our Embodied and Placed Selves

As mentioned above, access takes place somewhere with some body. Virtual spaces often are rendered not only as immaterial and detached from L/land but also as bodiless. We therefore find it imperative to reflect on our own embodied experiences and their place- and L/land-based relational politics in the virtual classroom.

Fiona writes to you from a city located on the Rouge River Tract currently named Markham. Originally part of the territory of the Mississauga Peoples, it was displaced through the Gunshot Treaty, which preceded the Williams Treaty of 1923. Fiona has relationships with land outside her settler relationship with this land through her birth-based citizenship in a territory called Hong Kong, in dispute regarding its national status following a century plus of British colonial occupation and then Chinese reunification. Her national and land relationships are not cohesive stories.

Esther lives and works on the same land as the university itself. Her father, a white settler, immigrated to Toronto in the early 1950s, while still a teenager, from postwar Italy. Both of her parents lived for many generations in and around Ceprano in the province of Lazio in central Italy. Just south of Rome, Ceprano has thrived on the banks of the River Lire, governed by secular, regent, religious, and imperial rule. In Italy, the family's historical and farming connection to the land is long and narrated relatively smoothly, without interruption, an effect of the stability of a European imperial power. Her family's migration to Canada gestured toward a traumatic generational disruption in relation to the land brought about by war and military occupation—a relationship shared by many of the first-generation settlers who are students in our classes.

We tell the story of our relationships with the L/land as they thread through our worldviews, pedagogy, and analysis of access.

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Materializing the DST 501 Digital Classroom as a Social Space

In this section, we reflect on the spatial relationships of the classroom in order to offer a different complexity than naming its relationship with L/land. We contend that the spatial relationships of our online class are simultaneously important with our L/land and embodied relationships. As part of the class, the debates took place within the already-made space of the university and the in-the-making space of the DST 501 fall 2018 classroom. Here we are reminded of Lefebvre's (1991, p. 73) concept of social space: "Being the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others." Three concepts work together to produce a social space. First is *spatial practice*, the space as it was built. Second is *representational space*, the space as conceptualized or imagined according to those who perceive it rather than experience it. And third is the space of inhabitants and users as it is lived, imagined, and, most importantly, experienced. This layer considers the spatial practices, the everyday routines and experiences, of people living within the spaces as constantly contributing to the creation and reimagining of the spaces.

Analyzing the first layer allows us to read the physical locations where our class took place before its digitalization. Disability studies scholar Jay Dolmage examines the metaphor of steep steps in his analysis of the eugenic foundations of the contemporary university. He notes that steep steps are material elements of the entrances of many buildings on the university's campus; they also announce that "access to the university is a movement upwards—only the truly fit survive this climb" (2017, p. 44). Although the online space of the university might claim to remove these steps, the ableism of the academy remains. The steep steps are not removed online for those students who work shifts, have caring responsibilities, live in rural and remote communities, cannot afford to live in Toronto, or are disabled. Access for disabled teachers, teaching assistants, and other facilitators of digital education space is also rarely examined (Brown & Leigh, 2018). Online classes transform the pedagogical space by inviting new voices, experiences, dreams, and bodies into the classroom, but these classes might contain those students in ways complicit with the ableist, settler-colonial, eugenicist, and capitalistic

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desires of Western higher education institutions (Dolmage, 2017; la paperson, 2017; Lee, 2017).

When reflecting on the second spatial layer, we are struck by the contradictory meanings between disability activist desires for the course and TMU's neo-liberal desires. For the university as a higher education institution, the classroom represents a transactionary space where disability knowledge is converted into fungible property that can be temporarily traded between the university and those who occupy the role of "student." However, we also need to consider how the plans of the School of Disability Studies contribute to the classroom. From a departmental level, the course is designed to introduce students to tools for thinking about disability in a way that centres the experiences and knowledge of disabled/mad/Deaf/sick people and interrogates how society frames disability and disabled people as problems before they continue learning more complex disability frameworks in more advanced courses. It seems that plans for this classroom denote contradictory meanings of academic ableism and disability justice. The class, though informed by the efforts of disabled activists of the late 1990s, was planned by TMU for the purpose of delivering knowledge on disability as part of the higher education industry. As such, as we lived access through the virtual classroom, we were conscious of the discrepancies between our desires for disability access as love (Mingus, 2011) and the university's desires for access as capital through the inclusion of a greater quantity of students under the auspices of "inclusion" (Ahmed, 2012; Lee, 2017).

This third layer of space, which Soja and Chouinard (1999) called "thirdspace," attends to the complex creative relationships that allow us to experience and dream of access in our reflections on our experiences with the debate assignment. There is a continual and complex negotiation of space, identity, and personal resources in our reading, as femme queer disabled scholars, of academic space as a thirdspace (Hseih & Saleh, 2021). As Stommel notes in his interview with Jones and Maloley in this volume, thirdspace forces us to "ask questions about how this space might function significantly differently" as meanings of the space are constructed as it is lived and, most importantly, experienced by those who use and transit through a given space (Soja & Chouinard, 1999, p. 204),

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thereby inviting us to push against the meanings imposed through the ways that the space was imagined and planned by the university and urban planners. Similarly, Hamraie (2018, p. 455) notes that there is a need to attend to the "value ladenness" of socio-spatial data often presented to the public as though the values are neutral, such as Google Maps, when data sets like maps are "*composed* and *designed* through observations, narratives, deliberations, and materializations." We find this helpful for thinking through the Desire2Learn Brightspace Learning Management System or D2L Course Shell, an interstitial space between the intersectional socio-spatial relations that we have just named, and our experiences in guiding students through the online debate assignment. Here we interpret the D2L Course Shell as both a virtual space in which many of our interactions with students take place and a virtual map through which students navigate access to their instructors, course materials, and each other to share their content and other relevant forms of participating in the course.

The shell's design went through its first iteration when the course was offered online during the regular academic year in response to softening enrolment in part-time programs, such as disability studies at TMU, and the challenges that students were experiencing in committing to the two-week intensive delivery module during the summer months. In its online form, our course was open to the wider university community and could attract a much larger enrolment beyond our program students. This meant that the program students—largely from working-class, rural, remote, and/or migrant communities—shared the virtual space with TMU students from departments such as engineering, business, and performance. However, it is important to keep in mind that, pre-COVID-19, online spaces were institutionally neglected and often invisible in university policy. Disability studies students, situated around the province and farther afield, risked profound social invisibility in the university. For instance, part-time online program students like those in our program were not able to "pre-enrol" or course-intend for courses. As such, the D2L Course Shell is a layered and interconnected virtual terrain "value laden" with elements, tools, and university expectations of its students and faculty. We also read the course shell as an agentive space that constantly pushes against the significance of the values behind how it was

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built, including assumptions about the accessibility of online spaces. For example, Esther's experience in transitioning to the online space after having taught the same course in person for many years left Esther feeling dislocated. Her instructions and guidance to students, usually seamless and well-honed after a decade of utterance, were interrupted by the disjunctions in time and space created by the online space of D2L. Nothing happened quickly, and in some sad instances her posts or messages to students were never read. Things proceeded without the energy and passion that bubbled in face-to-face interactions. Yet accessibility seemed to be better: everyone had resources, comments, and clarifications recorded in text, and competing schedules could be accommodated by the asynchronous model of the course.

We tell these sedimented relational histories of the course shell, how it came to be online, and our struggles because they provide the nesting grounds for our experiences with guiding the debate project in the next section. The complex spatio-conceptual materials used to build the course shell depict access as "a never-finished, always troubled project of access experimentation" (Hamraie, 2018, p. 479) that both complies with and unsettles the university's interpretations of access.

Our Embodied Relational Reflections on Access with the Debates

In this section, we reflect critically on accessibility in online classrooms through our encounters with students across three online platforms: emails, students' video presentations of their debates, and Google Docs. We move through these sites with the same slowness that Cherry et al. (2021) take in their pedagogical approach: a slowness that is deliberate and intentional, allows for relational ontologizing, and allows us to re-examine time, space, content, and relationships. Together with the course shell, these platforms are snapshots of the wayfinding that we designed for students to navigate their way through the debate assignment. As such, they provide our preconceived conditions of access and the university's preconceived notions of how students might hold conversations about their debate topic and how they might communicate with each other about collaborating.

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First Site: Emails

Emails are a key, but not an intentional, element of the debate assignment. Although collaborative spaces within the D2L Course Shell and the collaborative documents (see below) were intended as the site of dialogue and collective labour, emails to instructors mobilized progress on and completion of the debate assignment. They provided sharp insights into how the values of the institution are always in friction with our convivial aspirations. Significantly, emails also interrupted our carefully designed plans for how students would make their way together through the assignment. Emails were the channel through which students could directly tell us that our assignment instructions were not working for them. Yet emails also acted as a site in which care relations between instructor and student could be pushed beyond the university's neo-liberal expectations of teaching work as transactional since students also used them to share aspects of their lives other than strictly related to the course.

For instance, emails to us often display the complexity of intersecting desires for access in students' complaints about their group members' labour. The flexibility and openness of the online debates can mean that the collaborative ties of the course are uncomfortably loose (Bauman, 2005). In the neo-liberal university in which students are encouraged to perform and move upward in keeping with colonialist, racist, sexist, and ableist logics, another's need for flexibility can be perceived as a threat. More worrying is that online space affords the anonymity and somewhat sterile context in which students become the gatekeepers of capacitation and debilitation. Students who might not readily understand the reading, navigate effectively through the LMS, or write with fluency and speed are left to wither (Ong, 2002), whereas those who thrive within the contemporary university, even in its online form, consolidate their agency and success. We are left wondering whether the private, singular, and possessive space of email works to foster the conditions of individual competition and complaint and works against the crip desires of this particular assignment.

To illustrate, we turn to the emailed complaint that a fellow member was "absent" from the group. On the one hand, the meaning of absence here seems to be attached to the idea of what counts as "fair" labour. The

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idea of "fairness" is haunted by the idea that equality is synonymous with "sameness" since this assignment is a group assignment and all members of the group will receive the same grade. Hence, there is the idea that all members must contribute "equally" in order to be equally deserving of a shared grade, subsequently rendering those whose labour is "absent" (or not visible enough) as less deserving. On the other hand, disability studies theorists and activists have challenged the idea that sameness is synonymous with equality and how it does little to "[embrace] difference, [confront] privilege and [challenge] what is considered 'normal'" (Mingus, 2011). What if we were to narrate absence differently? What if not participating in an activity is a form of resistance to the normative demands of group work? What if non-participation is a way to make visible microaggressions among group members, the material challenges of attending university, or a move towards self care?

Although students often used emails to communicate troubles with access for the assignment milestones, they also used emails to connect with us by sharing detailed stories that allowed us to understand better who they were and the contexts in which they were experiencing difficulties with the assignment. We felt much gratitude to the students who chose to share their stories with us, but having been on the other side of the educator-student divide as disabled students left us haunted by the institutional pressures to disclose the full and often personal circumstances of requests for accommodation (Shanouda, 2019). When students were absent from email participation in their lack of response, either in direct conversations with us or reported through team members' emails to us, there was a complicated mix between the neo-liberal focus on individual student performance and our commitment to disability justice.

The former would interpret such an absence only as a student's failure to fulfill assignment requirements and thus be undeserving of a passing grade. The latter would allow us to centre interdependence in our learning community, including how we designed the virtual collaboration space for the debate. For example, whereas some of the emails about absent team members focused on the fears of the students that their group marks would be affected, or a sense of unfairness that the whole group would receive the same mark despite believing that not everyone had participated equally,

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for some groups the emails also contained a note of concern about the absent student, especially if the student had been participating and then seemingly lost contact.

Regardless, a kind of care work was present in both contexts since these emails generally came before the assignment was due and carried with them the expectation that we, as educators, would be able at least to contact the absent student rather than leave them unaccounted for somewhere in virtual space. When we received those emails, we often felt fear about whether students were safe or well or whether our assignment or teaching style was inaccessible to the point where some students had become completely disengaged. As such, the emails offered a site where practices of care between students and us were both subjected to the university's transactional, bureaucratized, and dehumanized expectations of care within the classroom, expectations, we would add, reinforced by the seemingly disembodied aspects of online spaces and the focus on access for the purpose of convenience and efficiency in the move to online teaching before COVID-19 forced universities to pivot to emergency remote teaching and later to hybrid teaching. Yet the emails that we received can also be interpreted as pushing against the university's expectations of what care looks like in higher education online learning spaces.

We situate emails about students' absences as a space in which to ask questions about how access is experienced by our students. How might their absence from participation in group work be connected to their embodied relationships to the time, place, space, and land in which our digital classroom takes place? And what might the stories that students choose to share with us allow for an understanding of the socio-spatial relationships that affect how they end up participating in our class? How do they challenge the values behind how participation is designed by us as instructors and more broadly the university? For example, a strong and stable internet connection is necessary. However, for Indigenous or rural students zooming in from reserves or rural areas, there can be barriers to accessing a stable internet connection. Or a student might not be able to afford a personal connectable device, have limited time to access the internet via library computers, or only have access to devices shared with their guardians, children, or siblings that are vital to their work or

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educational needs. Or perhaps a student is not participating with group members because English is not their first language or they find it difficult or impossible to communicate according to the conventions of a society that prioritizes English and verbal speech. Perhaps that is also why the student is not communicating as much with us.

Here we would like to draw attention to thinking about linguistic norms as socio-spatial practice. A student's ability to communicate in English is often central to how that student is evaluated in North American higher education spaces. The linguistic choices in a classroom are not neutral (Brand, 1995). The English language is a powerful colonial tool that produces and reinforces spaces to suit the embodied socio-spatial norms of the colonial authority. In educational contexts, how students in anglophone-majority universities, such as TMU, are always inadvertently evaluated by their English-language skills works through a blend of ableism and colonialism. As wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 12) wrote, "English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences, and all other branches of learning. English became *the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education." In this sense, students' absences reported to us as a "problem" through emails can offer a way of connecting students who experience barriers to participation in the assignment with the colonial relations to L/land and spatial practices within the university materialized through the normalization of English and verbal and textual modalities of communication that continue to haunt the course regardless of digitalization.

Students have shared many such stories with us that complicate absences from participation. Thinking of the spatial, L/land, place, and embodied relationships allows for a fuller narrative of what it means to access higher education that complicates online learning's narrative of access and inclusion for all.

Second Site: Videos

Debate assignments culminate in the production and posting of a short video argument that either supports or refutes the given proposition. The videos—in their departure from the regular form of course content—are invitational, bringing students into the course in ways that consolidate

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their depth of knowledge and their role as teachers-learners. Their embodied presence gestures not only toward the university's desire to become an inclusive space but also toward the seditious potential of the third university that foregrounds students as knowledge producers and sharers (la paperson, 2017). Videos meet the modern university's project of utilitarianism, providing students with digital literacy and production skills that meet the demand of the market (Ahmed, 2020). Many students comment that the videos are useful in their online learning, contributing to the sense of belonging to an embodied community "with real people, not just names and black boxes." Students are required to display their collaborations by posting six-minute videos shot at home and featuring one or more of their team members to the course shell. Once both the supporting and the opposing teams have posted their videos, classmates can post questions, experiences, and alternative analyses in response. Teams not only engage immediately with these responses but also keep track of them to address in a three-minute rebuttal to be posted several days after the debates have gone "live."

The brevity of the videos is deceptive in the sense that it masks the significance and meanings of the complex activities and interpersonal relations that went into students' production processes. For instance, considering that access is one of the criteria by which these videos are evaluated, students' experiments, agency, motivations, and intentions behind making their videos accessible are invisible to the viewer. Moreover, the short temporal manifestation of the students' production cannot display how the videos' production processes operate through the sense of time naturalized as normal to everyday life at the university yet a timescape bureaucratically designed by the university (Titchkosky, 2011, p. 20). The university, the students, and us as course designers and instructors all had different understandings of appropriate ways to spend time on the course. Those understandings affected the time that students could spend experimenting with access and the time that we could spend to encourage students to experiment with access in imperfect ways rather than comply with our course expectations regarding access. Thinking here with Hamraie's (2018) point about the value ladenness of socio-spatial data in maps and the importance of attending to the interpretations that went

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into designing those values, we would argue that reflecting critically on the temporal data behind the overall assignment and the videos allows us to unsettle the neo-liberal university's interpretations of time as well as to connect access to the different meanings attributed to the different temporal investments that made digital iterations of the debate in the form of video presentations possible.

Thus, our interactions with students regarding the production of the videos showed that the unaccounted time that exceeds the space of those six- and three-minute videos paints a messy relational picture of access that went into producing those videos. For instance, absent from the video is the time that students spent collaborating on how to collaborate. At the heart of such work is the question of how to make the collaborative process accessible to all collaborators. Students required aligned time maps to arrange their schedules so that they could create pockets of shared time in which they could make themselves accessible to each other to deliberate on debate points and record and edit their videos. Yet, in an increasingly digitized world, what would have required synchronously timed collaborations in making deliberation accessible to the whole team now could be done asynchronously. That is if that was what the students had spent time negotiating to do as part of their collaborative process. Students also needed to figure out how to make the videos accessible together, but this process involved multiple perspectives on what accessible meant: each student's, the instructors', the university's, and the broader society's dominant narratives of access.

The time necessary to make sense of all this was complicated by the assignment's timeline within the neo-liberal institution's rendering of time. This meant that time was framed as a finite resource and that students would have only so much time to experiment with access. Unfortunately, even with the attempt to design access as part of the collaborative process through the requirement that transcripts be included with the video for evaluation, some of the groups found that they ran out of time and did not include them in their submissions or only offered last-minute point-form notes. Transcripts are crucial for D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, and learning-disabled students and faculty (including one of the authors), but they help anyone who cannot access the video because

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of technology, learning preference, or time. Echoing part of a eugenicist ideology–laden narrative of academic ableism as described earlier in this chapter (Dolmage & Ineese-Nash, 2018), we as instructors had to reinforce the narrative of time as a finite resource for which exceeding it would mark a student's embodied performance.

Third Site: Google Docs

The use of collaborative docs as part of the debate assignment began during the onsite summer institute offerings of DST 501 to facilitate collaborative and professional work and skills. At their introduction, they seemed to be poised to foster access within groups and facilitate our work as instructors. They offered flexibility for students who balanced coursework with employment and home life; students could contribute to a single document in real time while at a distance or consecutively such that an assignment was always in flux.

For us as scholars, shared documents have always been convenient sites of collaborative dreaming, problem solving, and creation. They operate as important sites of collective access. For Esther, they enable "real-time" co-writing in which text can be entered anywhere in a document and then quickly cut and pasted into the coherent flow of the document by a writing partner. For Fiona, neurodiversity allows her to experience sound and language differently. In-person collaborative spaces are often auditory focused and have been inaccessible, leaving her scrambling to make sense of and recall what her collaborators discussed. Collaborative documents open spaces to reflect and participate in our own time and manner.

Uing shared documents in teaching soon became uneasy in light of our power relationships with students. Our role in the collaborative document veers between support and surveillance given the different relationships that we and our students hold within the classroom space. Specifically, our access to the students' collaborative writing document means that their collaboration is subject to the university's gaze on what counts as valuable participation in the course through our teaching bodies and subsequently carries with it other social relationships that contribute to the privileging of a hegemonic student body that meets the university's desires. In Jones and Maloley's interview with Stommel and Morris, the interviewees

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highlight how issues of surveillance have become more apparent under the sudden shift to emergency remote online learning in COVID-19 times; for many of us, these issues always have been apparent. The university, and more broadly Western models of education, have always been invested in governmentality or ways to categorize and control students from deviating from the university's expectations of which ways of learning constitute the "normal" student (Foucault, 1995; Hunter, 2019). Eunjun Kim (2017, p. 15) offers the concept of curative violence or "practices which construct the normative body by inducing metamorphosis according to its own determination of benefits and harms, as established by how closely disabled bodies resemble and mimic the normative body." In a similar vein, Shanouda (2019) writes about the "eugenic desire" of the university to conceal non-normative bodyminds.

The digitalization of learning has indeed enabled increasingly sophisticated technologies of surveillance in ways that provoke questions about the university's investment in surveilling the student body and how it configures the classroom space. As disabled instructors who have been students in hyper-surveillant contexts such as the Bloorview classroom, we are aware that surveillance is not just about the student's work but also about the educational institution's investment in normalizing a hegemonic student body and "pushing out" those who do not fit the institution's expectations of what counts as a "normative" learning body (Tuck, 2012). Like the teacher's role at Bloorview, our role at TMU is to monitor how the students participate in the assignment and how they collaborate with each other in ways that align with broader social relationships that have normalized what counts as the right sort of work at the university. However, that is not the single story here since collaborative documents also serve as sites for collaborative thinking and writing that refuse the traditional top-down power dynamics between teacher and student within the digital classroom space.

Collaborative documents can promise space for disability affiliations. They serve as a space of vulnerability, for we all fail in the co-production of the shared document: commenting on the wrong section, committing grammatical and spelling transgressions, revealing our half-baked ideas and feedback, deleting another's strong text, and otherwise falling short

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of producing the coherence of a "clean" text. In a culture that uses failure to fuel the neo-liberal drive for improvement and self-governance, writing publicly in the messy, half-formed manner of the collaborative online document also risks essentializing one's failed or failing status as a scholar and, in the context of our course, as a collaborator and learner (Halberstam, 2011).

Yet collaborative documents can be a public space of critical witnessing. They can reveal and possibly resist how university demands produce potentially excludable learning subjects. Thinking with Haraway (2016, p. 87), collaborative documents provide an "ecology of practices," a space in which students hold and take up one another's ideas, cultivating collective responsibility for their learning. As a site of collective access, collaborative documents enable interdependent learning and scholarship, resisting the valorization of the atomistic and autonomous student. Together we help one another to stay with our entangled and messy ideas. At their horizon of possibility, collaborative documents can weave together a multiplicity of insights, languages, analyses, and perspectives. Pushing us further, these documents can be a site of critical reflection and interrogation as we attend to whom and how we might all contribute. The resulting arguments might be more aligned with the actual intention of the debate assignment itself, a tentative unsettling of the binaries of "right and wrong" or "winning and losing" sides to surface the great complexity of disability dilemmas.

Materializing the Embodied, Placed, and Grounded Relationships of Doing Access

Access is more than a means of making our classroom more inclusive; it is relationships and situations; it is something brought into question every time we attempt to *do* access. As demonstrated through our socio-spatial reading of our experiences with the debate assignment aided by ideas from Hamraie's (2018) "critical access mapping," descriptions of doing access reflect a complex and imperfect process that renders epistemological and relational values that can disappear into the abstraction of agency, sedimented histories, and socio-spatial relations behind the interpretations of data used to produce the course in digital space. These relationships not

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only invite critical questions about inaccessibility and who is left out but also reveal a need to reflect on power relationships that organize higher education spaces and how they still "trouble" access even in the seemingly bodiless and dematerialized space of the virtual classroom. Without thinking about the material relationships and histories that seep into our choices and beliefs about doing access, it is easy to forget that the system of organizing learning needs into the "extra" and the "ordinary" is underpinned by interpretations of accessibility and disability that align with Eurocentric worldviews (Lovern, 2008).[3] We miss out on the possibility that students who enter our classrooms might desire access without desiring how higher education systems within settler societies such as Canada identify and make sense of their embodied identities and ways of learning and how such documentation is a form of violence (Shanouda, 2019) that reinforces the settler society's interpretation of mind-body difference and experiences of disablement as well as the simultaneous and potentially resistive and complicit agency of those who experiment with access within all of the relations within which the class exists: people, institution, space, place, technology, and L/land. These relationships nurture more complex questions about the online classroom that might disappear with the dematerialized imaginaries of virtual space. How can we account for students (or teachers) who might have a relationship with land that precludes them from even considering formal documentation that the institution requires to justify different ways that they might need to flourish within it? How might we utilize the vastly different spatial politics of online spaces to reconfigure higher education classrooms in ways that push against institutional norms that have kept higher education spaces enveloped around bodies that fit into traditional in-person classrooms?

Notes

1 We are reminded of Henri Lefebvre's (1991, p. 51) concept of abstract space. For a space to be understood as abstract means that "it operates through the negation of everything that underpins" it to allow for it to exist in the first place, so it is a space that reflects the power of the dominant elites within the society. Abstract space conceals the real subject—the state—whose intentions saturate that space.

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2 For example, one of the topics is centred on the idea of eugenics. Students who choose this topic must take a "for" or "against" position on the proposition that "permitting d/Deaf parents to select for fetal characteristics of deafness takes us down the 'slippery slope' of designer babies." The debate necessarily invokes the Canadian state and its laws. In order to argue successfully either "for" or "against" the proposition, the team must come to terms with the eugenic undertones of the Assisted Human Reproduction Act (2004).

3 In "Native American Worldviews and the Discourse on Disability," Lovern (2008, p. 5) explains that "for Native Americans, the worldview is one that involves an understanding of the wholeness of existence." Referencing Gregory Cajete's work, she explains that this means that "the individual does not experience an independence of being as the primary mode of existence. Instead, the primary mode of existence is communal involving 'all my relations'" (p. 86). Those relations include "all levels of interaction in existence including human, animal, plant, spiritual and elemental" (p. 5). As such, discourse on disability and indigeneity is fundamentally flawed. What settler society has determined to be norms are fundamentally oriented toward serving that society as well as European/Western cultural beliefs about the body.

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8 Students as Designers, not Consumers

Framing Accessible, Participatory Learning as a Social Justice Approach to Online Course Design

Hannah L. Stevens and Mary McCall

Despite recent declines in enrolment in two-year and four-year in-person programs in public and private (including non-profit and for-profit) institutions of higher education, online course enrolment across these institutions is on the rise (Ginder et al., 2019; Lokken, 2019; Seaman et al., 2018). The massive shift to online learning because of COVID-19 has dramatically increased these numbers, with 34% of 3,000 American colleges largely switching to emergency remote education at the start of the 2020 school year and 10% moving fully online (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). One course that affects nearly all of undergraduate education is the first-year writing (FYW) course (also known as first-year composition), a general educational requirement often part of the "institutional 'core'" for two-year and four-year institutions in the American college system (Warner, 2018). FYW contributes to undergraduate education by supporting the ongoing development of students' writing skills and rhetorical knowledge (i.e., using language strategically and ethically for particular contexts, purposes, and audiences), guiding students in offering constructive feedback on peer writing, and encouraging students to reflect

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on and assume responsibility for their own writing practices (National Council of Teachers of English, 2013). Although FYW is typically taught face-to-face (f2f), its online equivalent is growing (Rendahl & Kastman Breuch, 2013).

Consequently, there has been an increase in scholarship within composition studies about online writing instruction (OWI). Prior research has identified key issues pertaining to FYW online learning (Peterson, 2001; Savenye et al., 2001), outlined guidelines for clear communication with students (Ragan & White, 2001), compared instructor workload between online and f2f FYW courses (Reinheimer, 2005) as well as student learning in them (Bourelle et al., 2016; Sackey et al., 2015; Sapp & Simon, 2005), and examined students' study habits (Rendahl & Kastman Breuch, 2013). Still, there have been calls for further research on students' learning experiences in online FYW courses (Boyd, 2008; Litterio, 2018). Our chapter addresses this need by analyzing the intersections among OWI, issues of inclusion and accessibility (e.g., Borgman & Dockter, 2018; Oswal & Melonçon, 2014, 2017), and user-centred design (e.g., Greer & Harris, 2018; Opel & Rhodes, 2018; Shivers-McNair et al., 2018) when it comes to designing accessible online course content for students. By situating these intersections in an online FYW context (which also considers the increasing shift to online learning during a pandemic), we add to prior scholarship in composition studies that largely focuses on helping instructors to position themselves as usability designers. We argue that what is underdeveloped is the role of the student in the online writing classroom or, more accurately, the possibility of collaboration by the instructor and students to make an online course wholly inclusive. Indeed, as revealed in Mehta and Gleason (2021), it is not enough to be empathetic toward the position of those being designed for; this perpetuates an othering mindset. Instead, we must work with one another to understand the affective dimensions of our experiences.

Our chapter extends discussions about inclusive course design by rethinking approaches to accessible online curriculum that move away from a more linear type of structure—that is, instructors as designers create materials for students as consumers (Opel & Rhodes, 2018)—to

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a more iterative one in which students can participate as designers. We review and update Blythe's (2001) integration of user-centred practices with OWI by situating them within a participatory design approach to online instruction that studies users' "tacit knowledge and [takes] it into account when building new systems" (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 166). In our case, we understand "users" and "systems" to mean students and online course designs respectively.

We argue that our approach to OWI via participatory design and its focus on students speaks to current discussions of accessibility and usability and advances in learning management systems (Harris & Greer, 2016; Witte, 2018) that have evolved since Blythe's work; models ethical, "dialogical interaction" between instructors and students (Salvo, 2001); and in so doing offers a social justice approach to OWI that evokes principles of diversity, inclusion, and equality (Jones, 2016).[1] In this way, we address Morris and Stommel's questions in Chapter 3 of this volume: "How do students become full participants in their education? And what needs to happen? What barriers do we need to knock down?"

There are concerns that online versions of FYW courses "disrupt the traditional face-to-face FYW courses" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2013, p. 2) and do not provide the same level of personalized attention from instructors that has been linked to college student retention. These concerns are reflected in myths about the rapid shift to online learning during the onset of the coronavirus that assume that f2f courses became online ones, that instructors "didn't know what to do," and consequently that the quality of instruction diminished (Skallerup Bessette, 2020). Such assumptions point to the need to distinguish between OWI, which involves thorough planning before a course takes place, and emergency remote teaching, "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges et al., 2020).

Ultimately, pedagogical approaches as well as the material conditions of (online) learning environments affect student retention (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2007; Griffin & Minter, 2013; Powell, 2009). They also hold special weight for under-represented populations such as students of colour, first-generation students, non-traditional students (e.g., those 24 and

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older and/or taking classes part time because of work or family reasons), English-language learners, and those with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act defines disability as a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities" (US Department of Justice, 2020), which can be extended to include "psychological, emotional, and mental health" (Scott, 2019). Sins Invalid, a disability justice performance project, adds to understandings of disability by claiming that "all bodies are caught in the bindings of ability, race, class, gender, sexuality and citizenship" and advocating for disability justice, the idea that "only universal, collective access can lead to universal, collective liberation" (Berne et al., 2018).[2] As Griffin and Minter (2013, p. 148) stress, failing to "improve learning potential in online classrooms by developing pedagogies that make the best use of emerging literacies is extreme: students drop out." Although consideration of multiple identity markers is necessary, and students can identify with more than one identity, we focus on accessibility initiatives within OWI whose aim is "not only to enable people with disabilities [e.g., students] to *consume* information but [also] to help them *produce* it" (Porter, 2009, p. 216). These initiatives can also end up benefiting other populations of students who do not identify as disabled.

In what follows, we review literature that highlights the relationship between student needs and demographics, a crucial component of promoting teacher-student engagement and designing online, accessible courses. Next we outline the stages of participatory design that situate students as co-designers of their online courses and describe how pedagogical interventions designed by Stevens model these stages. Stevens is a former graduate student of our university's Master of Arts program in English, and McCall is a current faculty member who provided guidance on how Stevens's inventions map onto participatory design. We end the chapter with recommendations about how Stevens's pedagogical methods can be further developed and adopted by other online instructors seeking to enact the goals of participatory design. In so doing, we argue that involving students in the design process must be treated as a social justice imperative in order to achieve a fully inclusive and disability- and accessibility-driven course design.

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Literature Review

Incorporating Accessibility into Online Writing Instruction

Because students can perceive online courses as "'teacher-dominated'" (Lapadat, 2002, as cited in Boyd, 2008, p. 239), we argue that instructors should be attentive to the transparency of their online course designs and invite students to be course co-designers, which has been touched on in prior literature (Blythe, 2001; Boyd, 2008) but needs further attention. A fundamental component of this work is the relationship between demographics and student learning needs. Some studies suggest the contrary, reporting that there are no significant demographic differences between students who excelled in, passed, or failed their online courses (Neuhauser, 2002; West et al., 2006). However, these studies did not report their participants' race, gender, or disability. This lack of information is a notable omission considering that efforts to increase college access likely will result in a greater number of under-represented populations (e.g., racial or ethnic minority groups, English-language learners, and students with disabilities) in (online) writing classrooms (Griffin & Minter, 2013). Therefore, considering this range of students and their needs when developing inclusive course content and design is vital, particularly in online contexts that might have a higher reading load than f2f courses (Griffin & Minter, 2013), demand more "independent time management" from students with disabilities (Scott, 2019, p. 11), and can widen the performance gulf between different demographics already present in f2f courses (Xu & Jaggars, 2013).

In response, programmatic and scholarly work in composition studies has concentrated on advocating that online writing instruction be "universally inclusive and accessible" (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 2013). In its *Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction*, the Conference on College Composition and Communication Committee states that, to be both "inclusive" and "accessible," an OWI environment has to be attuned to the "needs of learners with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, multilingual backgrounds, and learning challenges related to socioeconomic issues" and to provide a "proactive approach to physical and pedagogical

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access [that] is superior to one that includes 'added on' or retrofitted alternatives" (7). This centring of pedagogy is key, especially within a document aimed at providing guidelines for all postsecondary writing programs, considering critiques of inclusionism within disability studies. Historically, higher education has understood disability under the medical model as a condition to be cured, which simultaneously "mandates able-bodiedness and able-mindedness" (Dolmage, 2017, p. 7) and renders those with disabilities as "invisible" until they can advocate for accommodations (p. 9). As long as these accommodations hold able-bodied standards as the ideal, they uphold "neoliberal inclusion schemes seeking to achieve equality through the flattening out of embodied differences" (Mitchell et al., 2014, p. 295). Truly inclusive efforts use (disabled) students' needs to reform approaches to teaching as opposed to "fixing" or isolating those who do not conform to normative curricula. Mitchell and colleagues (2014) discuss Universal Design for Learning as one way to foreground disabled students' needs, which can be a jumping-off point to user-centred design described later in this section.

Ultimately, persistent barriers to technology and instructors' ignorance of these issues "work to maintain the abled as the normative ideology" (Oswal & Melonçon, 2014, p. 284). Questions, then, have arisen about the overall usability of LMSs, particularly for online courses.[3] According to The Web Accessibility Initiative, "usability" is "about designing products to be effective, efficient, and satisfying" (Henry et al., 2016). Dringus and Cohen (2005) outline a usability heuristic checklist that can help instructors to identify usability problems in their online courses related to visibility, functionality, aesthetics, feedback and help, error prevention, memorability, course management, and interactivity. Such a checklist can contribute to "good usability" in an online course by "having the mechanics of the learning process [be] transparent to the user" and facilitating exchanges between instructors and students about the overall experience of using the LMS (Dringus & Cohen, 2005, p. 7). Nonetheless, Oswal and Melonçon (2017, p. 67) remain skeptical of checklists (e.g., the Quality Matters Rubric) since they "propose a one-size fits all model" that "present[s] course design as something to be checked off." Instead, they argue for the application of participatory design in online courses

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that supports a "move from an ideology of normalcy to an ideology of inclusion" (p. 68) by involving both instructors and students in iterative processes for developing more accessible and inclusive course designs.

Modelling Participatory Design within Online Writing Instruction

To keep students at the centre of instruction and move away from "'teacher-dominated'" courses (Lapadat, 2002, as cited in Boyd, 2008, p. 239), composition studies and the related field of technical and professional communication have turned to the concept of user-centred design (UCD). With respect to technology and/or product development, UCD marks a shift from systems-centred to user-centred approaches in which designers start the process "with user's practical knowledge (rather than with a set of formal specifications)" (Blythe, 2001, p. 332). The writing classroom equivalent would be identifying and incorporating students' needs into course design (a user-centred approach) rather than evaluating students' experiences of a course after its design, technologies, and goals have been predetermined by the instructor (a systems-centred approach) (Blythe, 2001, p. 334). Instructors might also be constrained by an institutionally mandated choice of LMS or by the interface of the LMS itself, which "tacitly reinforces the systems approach to design" (Harris & Greer, 2016, p. 48).

A user-centred approach to OWI is one way in which instructors can mitigate such constraints by focusing on "users first, technology second" (Greer & Harris, 2018, p. 17) while being aware that no LMS is a neutral tool given how its "design structures the way students engage with the instructor, the content, and each other" (Harris & Greer, 2016, p. 47). UCD is also attractive to (online) instruction since its goal to "decenter authority by placing 'users' at the heart of the design endeavor" (Opel & Rhodes, 2018, p. 73) is complementary to the goals of learner-centred education that "positions students as co-constructors of knowledge" (Boyd, 2008, p. 224). Some scholars (Bjork, 2018; Opel & Rhodes, 2018) have noted that uncritically applying "users" to students risks positioning them as "consumers" instead of learners.

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It is also important here to address conceptions of universal design, "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design" (Connell et al., 1997). As Aimi Hamraie (2016) explains, though universal design was conceptualized as an accessibility practice, it has become a way in which designers have come to understand uncritically disability as tied to systems of oppression. Much like usability-inspired checklists, universal design flattens and effectively erases disabled experiences. Although Hamraie might have critiqued universal design with respect to built environments, this naturally extends into the architecture of online educational spaces and curricula. For instance, though administrators and educators might use an LMS compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, the standards promoted through these guidelines do not necessarily recognize the diversity of disabled experiences.

Making sure that web content follows universal standards of accessibility as set forth by the guidelines (e.g., high colour contrast or screen reader compatibility or what is referred to in Chapter 9 of this volume as "basic web accessibility") perpetuates disability as an issue of compliance rather than as intersectional and interdependent (Hamraie, 2018). As we describe later in this chapter, conceptualizations of an accessible LMS such as Blackboard Ally run the risk of reducing disability to yet another checklist. This is not to say that usability—as it has been described in this chapter—or universal design do not hold value; rather, the two can act as jumping-off points that then need the principles of UCD truly to understand and preserve the diversity of human experiences.

However, UCD cannot be adopted wholesale into f2f or online writing courses, but it can inform course design. The constraints of the (online) classroom (e.g., instructors not being able to conduct extensive research on their students before classes begin, adjust their course designs during the time frame of the semester, or completely divest the authority granted to them by the institution) mean that instructors can model but not duplicate UCD practices (e.g., collecting user research, performing iterative design, and collaborating with users during the design process) (Blythe, 2001; Greer & Harris, 2018). Some strategies that they can use to apply user-centred principles to student-centred design include integrating

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quick, frequent usability check-ins with students (Borgman & Dockter, 2018; Shivers-McNair et al., 2018) and presenting course content in multiple formats while paying attention to accessibility features such as video captions (Borgman & Dockter, 2018). The capacity of instructors here plays a crucial role in determining how these user-centred strategies actually play out (Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021).

To augment these strategies, instructors can turn to participatory design, which can be seen as a branch of UCD by being done "*with* the users" as opposed to being done on "*behalf* of the users" (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 165; refer also to Salvo, 2001; Mehta & Gleason, 2021). Stemming from Pelle Ehn's work in Scandinavian design, participatory design "attempts to examine the tacit, invisible aspects of human activity; assumes that these aspects can be productively and ethically examined through design partnerships with participants, partnerships in which researcher-designers and participants cooperatively design artifacts, workflow, and work environments; and argues that this partnership must be conducted iteratively so that researcher-designers and participants can develop and refine their understanding of the activity" (Salvo, 2001, p. 164).

Although participatory design, such as UCD, began in a workplace context, it can be adapted to a student-centred classroom in order to "engage students as active participants, . . . enable them to set some goals for learning, . . . [and] recognize the *techne* [i.e., knowledge] that they bring to the class" (Blythe, 2001, p. 335). One way to help students articulate their often tacit *techne* is to assign writing prompts that have them reflect on and clarify their writing and learning needs (Blythe, 2001). Other applications of participatory design within OWI include publishing scholarship with students about reflections on course design (Shivers-McNair et al., 2018); using backward design to construct a course, its activities, and its assignments around learning outcomes (Greer & Harris, 2018; Harris & Greer, 2016); breaking up longer writing activities into "smaller 'micro lessons'" (Harris & Greer, 2016, p. 51); and offering students different options for completing assignments, communicating with the instructor and their classmates, and navigating course content (Harris & Greer, 2016).

To achieve its goals, participatory design "emphasizes co-research and co-design," which can be enacted through three stages of methods as

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discussed by Spinuzzi (2005, p. 167): initial exploration of work, discovery processes, and prototyping. In the initial exploration of work, designers use ethnographic methods such as observations, interviews, and site visits to learn more about the users and how they work with one another. In the discovery processes, designers and users collaborate to understand users' values and goals for the work being done and come to a consensus on what the result should be. In prototyping, designers and users iteratively redesign the workplace and its tools (pp. 167–168). Combined, these stages aim to "empower workers to take control over their work" (p. 167). This "activist brand of research" (p. 167) is arguably connected to social justice or the "critical reflection and action that promotes agency for the marginalized and disempowered" (Jones, 2016, p. 343) and can be adopted to acknowledge and establish students as co-creators of online course designs.

Another approach to participatory design is modelled on Whitlock and Zbitnew's chapter in this volume, "Making Accessible Media: An Interview," which outlines the creation of an open-access course that teaches how to integrate accessibility into media content. Here inclusive approaches are seen as a starting point rather than an afterthought. Although prior scholarship cited earlier has recommendations for applying participatory design practices to OWI, the closest that comes to modelling its three stages of methods is Rodrigo and Ramírez's (2017) study of developing templates for online technical and professional communication courses. Thus, more research is needed on how instructors of online FYW courses can likewise adapt the stages of participatory design to collaborate with students in online course designs and in so doing create a more inclusive and accessible online learning environment.

Modelling Participatory Design in an Online, First-Year Writing Classroom

In this section, Stevens describes two pedagogical interventions designed as assignments within an FYW online writing course (OWC) at a land-grant, Midwestern university noted for agricultural education. Both

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interventions ask students to consider the tenets of participatory design as a way "to understand knowledge by doing" (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 163) in order to assess their own knowledge of accessibility in a self-contained way. Specifically, the interventions act as examples of stages 1 and 2 of participatory design: initial exploration of work and discovery processes. In the section on recommendations, Stevens describes how her online FYW classes move toward stage 3, prototyping, and suggests ways in which to enact this stage more directly. Although these FYW courses are focused primarily on different genres of writing, students are able successfully to consider their own places in the digital world through these interventions by analyzing accessibility and usability in a writing context.

Additionally, a focus on usability and accessibility produces meaningful conversations on disability, and the stigmatizing actions of the higher education system, which have resulted in a shifting of the "'problem' of disability away from individuals and toward institutions and attitudes" (Price, 2011, p. 4). Distress and loneliness are on the rise (McGinty et al., 2020) and allowing the online writing classroom to become a safe(r) space for students to explore their accessibility needs becomes important during a time of increased student anxiety and depression. In their chapter in this volume, "Caring Online: A Justice-Oriented Approach to Online Pedagogy," Reid and Shanouda offer a model of how to co-create a safe(r) space with students in an online classroom based on a care-informed pedagogy grounded in love and justice. Care-informed pedagogy is one method that can be used in tandem with participatory design in order to create a more inclusive and equitable classroom.

Institutional Context and Description of Course and Assignments

Although the university where Stevens's pedagogical interventions took place began as an agricultural university, it prioritizes the humanities through a vertical writing program housed in the Department of English that reaches students at two different stages of their education. The FYW general education requirement, English 110 (College Composition I) or 120 (College Composition II), is intended for first-year students, but

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students at other levels can enrol in it. After students have earned at least 60 credits, typically in their third or fourth year, they enrol in a 300- or 400-level discipline-specific writing course. This dual writing requirement gives the department's writing program the unique opportunity to reach all students enrolled at the university, an opportunity not afforded to every undergraduate writing program.

These FYW courses are capped at 22 students per section and often taught by graduate teaching assistants who have taken the required graduate teaching practicum. In addition, instructors have the opportunity to teach English 120 asynchronously online. As Stevens has noted, though, instructors in the FYW program are often left to their own faculties in regard to online course design, a common situation noted in OWI scholarship (Litterio, 2018; Melonçon, 2017). In what follows, Stevens describes her pedagogical inventions that model the principles of participatory design. While a master's student and lecturer in the Department of English, she taught seven sections of FYW online as the instructor of record. These sections were designed using the LMS Blackboard and had a total of 135 students. During the fall 2019 semester, when these interventions were introduced, her sections of English 120 included three large writing assignments, 24 small pieces of work (e.g., discussion boards, journals, etc.), three peer review sessions, a midterm reflection, and a final portfolio, all of which culminated to produce a writing course with collaboration and communication as a major tenet. The course was taught using a labour-based grading contract (Inoue, 2019) that prioritized students' exploration of the writing process rather than a graded final document, thus prioritizing the smaller "labours" of the course such as discussion boards and peer review sessions just as much as the larger writing projects.

However, Stevens also introduced the idea of students as co-designers through a partnership that she developed with her students allowing them to consider their accessibility needs and voice these needs and concerns. These interventions also recognize an ongoing conversation on disability (especially mental disability), accessibility, and inclusion at large in academia.

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Positioning Students as Co-Designers in a FYW Course

In this section, Stevens discusses two assignments situated at different points of the semester, designed simultaneously to assess the students' readiness for the online environment from an accessibility standpoint and to position them as co-designers of the course. Each assignment was meant for students to reflect on different areas of their learning, termed "exploration" and "reflection" below, taking into account Spinuzzi's (2005) three stages of participatory design research as well as building upon Blythe's (2001, p. 338) pedagogical strategy of prompting students to articulate their knowledge. What these assignments prove is each student's ability to become an active participant in the design process of a course and to advocate for their own accessibility concerns and needs.

Exploration

The first assignment was introduced within the first week of Stevens's fall 2019 asynchronous online course before students even began thinking about writing, the writing process, or rhetorical conventions. The goal of this intervention was for students to assess their readiness for the online environment in their own time and at their own pace by honestly answering questions, via Google Forms, that led them to an understanding of their positionality in regard to online learning. Questions varied from broad, such as a student's internet access and potential backup internet plans, to narrow, such as explicitly asking students if they had regular access to a computer (described in more depth below). This assignment also gave instructors involved in emergency remote teaching (ERT) the opportunity to dialogue with their students on their online readiness and how instructors could address and/or change negative online experiences.

To start, the survey asked students to participate in what was termed "Part One," which included a "syllabus scavenger hunt" that allowed them to explore aspects of the syllabus on their own as well as to showcase to Stevens that they were able to access this important information successfully. From this scavenger hunt (which needed to be completed before students could move forward), they then explored some of the grading

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structure of the course in "Part Two" of the survey and were asked to reflect on their own responsibilities, such as where to submit projects and how. In this way, students felt more prepared to move forward knowing how they were to be graded, and they were afforded the opportunity to comment and express their concerns, and many did so. Stevens found that often students were not asked for their opinions or to propose alternatives to a grading structure in prior courses (online, ERT, and/or f2f); consequently, starting with a large aspect of the course such as the grading structure eased students into designing smaller aspects such as Blackboard header titles with more confidence.

Finally, students were asked in "Part Three" to begin to become participants in the design process by first exploring their readiness for the online environment. Stevens structured this section of the survey and asked the students to state their intentions in taking an online course. This gave them the opportunity to reflect on why they enrolled in it and what motivated them to take this particular class. In this way, they began to think about what they needed from the course itself (i.e., the credits or an alternative that worked with their work schedules). To adapt this portion of the survey to an ERT environment, instructors might choose to ask their students what their semester was like during the initial changes made for the pandemic or their familiarity with online courses, with a focus on the technology used. That way instructors are made aware of where students are in regard to ERT, and students have the opportunity to reflect on the successes and potential failures of their previous online experiences.

Next the survey gives students a bit of factual evidence for aspects of the course, such as how much time an online course requires. For example, one prompt states, "I expect to spend as much time (if not more) in an online course as I would if I were to take an on-campus f2f course," and it offers students a sliding scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. If students answered within the disagree to strongly disagree portion of the scale, then they were given a response that sent them to a *US News* article outlining the amount of time that the average student spends on an online course (Friedman, 2018). Additionally, instructors might wish to update this information with any relevant time-based data that have emerged since the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Although Stevens's goal by the end of the course was to have students research these answers on their own, this intervention allowed them to begin to explore and participate in the ways that Stevens had initially designed the course. In addition, providing these prompts began a dialogue between the students enrolled in the course and the instructor that continued throughout the semester. Students were asked and encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, or concerns about any topic, which began with this first activity. In this course, Stevens chose to assess this assignment and the subsequent one described below on a pass/fail basis to allow students to answer honestly without the pressure of a grade affecting their responses.

This early intervention proved to be twofold since it also allowed the instructor to analyze the results of the survey and decide from there if any changes needed to be made to the course content and/or structure as a co-designer. Although this intervention did not directly involve students' input regarding physical design of the course, it considered their needs and allowed the instructor to begin to form a relationship with her students that put their accessibility needs first. In addition, it encouraged students to begin to consider themselves as active participants in all aspects of the course, which made the transition to becoming a co-designer more meaningful and transparent.

Reflection

The second assignment, a midterm reflection email, was introduced approximately midway through the course when students were able to reflect accurately on their progress toward completing it. As Bunn (2013, p. 507) reminds instructors, a writing prompt asking students to reflect gives tangible proof that the work has been done. This assignment specifically asked students to consider accessibility as it applied to the LMS Blackboard. Stevens's overarching goal in having students reflect on and consider accessibility concerns was and continues to be to push students to understand their place in the world as well as to recognize what they need from the university, professor, technology, and so on in regard to accessibility, design, and usability. This email also allowed students to recognize their learning as professionalism and asked them to continue

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considering this professionalism by being open and honest about their accessibility needs. They were asked to consider referencing the web usability guidelines from the US Department of Health and Human Services or the web content accessibility guidelines from the Web Accessibility Initiative to help them put language to their accessibility needs:

> Reflect briefly on the tools you need for the next half of the semester from the class. Do you need more peer review? More explanation? Less explanation? More communication? Less communication? What do you *specifically* need from your colleagues and me? Especially consider what you might need from our Blackboard site—you might consider referencing the "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" or the "Web Design & Usability Guidelines" which were discussed at the beginning of the semester, to consider if there are accessibility concerns you can forecast for the rest of the semester. What needs might you have moving forward from our Blackboard shell that are not being addressed?

This assignment required active accessibility emphasis throughout the course for students to respond honestly to prompts such as those above. As a result, responses to this assignment ranged from little to no accessibility changes to in-depth looks at how Blackboard could be changed for the better.

Although this was not a user experience or technical communication course, Stevens argues that students who express concerns[4] about accessibility and become active participants in the design process become key aspects of critical thinking and the writing process. Since a typical first-year composition course asks students to begin to consider and develop a meta-awareness of rhetorical conventions, Stevens recognizes accessibility and expressing accessibility concerns as an extension of this exploration into ethos and rhetoric at large. In this way, students perceive themselves as owners not only of their writing but also of the course and work collaboratively to create the most accessible environment possible—an environment that Stevens in no way could shape on her own. Ultimately, students should be given every opportunity

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to express their concerns in order to become true co-designers of the course.

This intervention also critiques the use of checklists, similar to Oswal and Melonçon (2017). Although the prompt above cites a checklist, it does so in the hope of continuing the conversation rather than ending it by relying on the aspects of the checklist to design the online environment passively. The above intervention was not designed initially with Oswal and Melonçon in mind; however, paying attention to their research, Stevens made changes to the prompt and overall assignment to make both stronger in their critique of checklists.

As explored in the literature review, both Stevens and McCall have witnessed an over-reliance on checklists or a prescriptive approach not only to accessibility and course design but also to teaching with technology at large. Rather than trying to normalize the classroom with checklists and suggested accessibility changes, the above interventions work to involve students in an attempt to grant access "to those students who are outside of the realms of normal" (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017, p. 63). Students can also choose instead to focus on a checklist rather than thinking critically about the guidelines. This tendency can be avoided perhaps with an open conversation revolving around the dangers of checklists in an online context. Emphasized by the assignment above, one way to prevent falling into a prescriptive approach to OWI is to embrace participatory design that "emphasizes co-research and co-design" (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 167).

It is also worth noting that these interventions address some of the concerns that instructors might have as they continue to teach online during the COVID-19 pandemic. As instructors entered the fall 2020 semester, many universities opted to continue emergency remote teaching rather than reverting to face-to-face instructional methods. Although this move allows for adequate planning by the instructor, students who have been assigned online learning might be less prepared than students voluntarily enrolling in an online course pre-pandemic. As such, a focus on accessibility proves to be just as beneficial for students new to the online structure who might never have considered their accessibility needs before.

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Limitations

Stevens has witnessed success with the interventions above as they apply to accessibility and students' active participation in the design of the course. However, the interventions are far from perfect, and certain limitations still present challenges to the instructor, students, and course. These interventions are part of Stevens's ongoing process and research methodology and are not representative of more global initiatives within the FYW component of the English department's vertical writing program.

The LMS is set by university guidelines, likely the case at other two- and four-year institutions. What this means is that instructors are bound by the university to use the LMS to teach the online aspects of their courses since this software application is what students are guaranteed. Stevens has attempted in the past to use other management systems, such as Google Drive or Google Classroom, but these file-hosting services pose a privacy issue since outside programs might not be covered under the university's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations. Stevens has noticed that Blackboard does not allow for a strict co-designer relationship since the instructor is still responsible for changes to the LMS. Students can propose changes, but it is up to the instructor to implement those changes. Instructors under the ERT model might find similar issues with video-conferencing systems such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Hierarchy is inherent in these systems, which, as noted by Stommel and Morris in Chapter 3, "is not particularly effective and doesn't create a community that is hospitable." That is, the designs of these systems reinforce the hierarchy of teacher and student, often by defaulting the instructor as the "host."

In terms of time constraints, each of the two interventions described above takes a week out of the OWC: a week at the beginning of the semester and a week at midterm. In a typical online course, there are 17 weeks dedicated to learning writing conventions, and taking two weeks out of that structure can pose potential problems with time and pacing. Prior to these interventions, Stevens experimented with taking weeks at a time to discuss technology and accessibility and has always included a midterm reflection. As such, she pushes back against the ableist notion that time spent on technology and accessibility is wasteful, but she recognizes that

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other online instructors (especially with shorter semesters) might not be able to devote as much time to explicit conversations with students about technology use. However, this also speaks to an inaccessible university semester structure at large that does not allow for much flexibility with course content outside university or programmatic requirements.

In terms of potential student resistance, as with any assignment added to an FYW course curriculum, there is the risk of pushback from students expected to take extra steps to produce additional work. However, Stevens has noticed little resistance from students, whom she has noticed become more anxious than unwilling to attempt this work. Important is the approach that the instructor takes to involve the students in this process and that such an approach is transparent and to the students' benefit so as to avoid their frustrations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Practising Prototyping

Although Stevens's interventions address stages 1 and 2 of participatory design, her course did not contain an assignment that explicitly addresses stage 3, prototyping. Nonetheless, the prototyping stage happened more indirectly throughout the fall 2019 semester of her FYW OWCs. For example, students voiced issues with finding certain materials, which evolved into a conversation and ultimately (if necessary) a new location for said materials, which models prototyping. These actions evoked the goal of empowering users—in this case, students—within participatory design (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 168) by having them recognize how their accessibility concerns were taken seriously by their instructor, which ultimately made the course stronger.

Although Stevens did not adopt an assignment that directly involved stage 3, both she and McCall believe that the prototyping stage can exist as an assignment similar to the two interventions described above. As Rodrigo and Ramírez (2017) state, the prototyping stage occurs after (in their case) instructors (or participants) have explored (stage 1) and discovered (stage 2). What Rodrigo and Ramírez describe is a tangible process between colleagues that allows them to propose, develop, and test "new

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curricular elements to be eventually incorporated into the master courses" (p. 323). Similarly, an assignment could be developed to allow students to propose, develop, and test new elements of the course either on their own or in a group, similar to the peer review process. Stage 3 of participatory design also mirrors the process that one might take to write a proposal document, and both Stevens and McCall recognize this as an opportunity to bring the prototyping stage to the online writing classroom.

Recommendation 2: Working within the LMS

As Harris and Greer (2016, p. 46) state, "to teach writing online is to design an environment." The environment, however, is often dictated by guidelines provided by the university, which Harris and Greer discuss in depth as posing problems to students' learning (pp. 47–49). In response, they propose a few different alternatives that work around the constraints of the LMS and enact participatory design. For example, they describe using Google Docs for certain class activities (p. 50), which proves to be more collaborative than most options provided by Blackboard that do not allow for individual changes on the students' end.

However, such recommendations can lead to issues of privacy if the university prioritizes the LMS to support Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act guidelines (as opposed to a free web service such as Google Classroom that cannot guarantee that private student information such as grades remains secure). In such cases, instructors can still follow participatory design practices, especially with the interventions described above. For instance, it can be beneficial to invite students to design the activities with the instructor in an exploratory survey. Here students might be allowed to design the survey themselves or to explore ways to change it for future students. With the use of Google Forms, changes can be made easily since the instructor can add students as editors. In this way, students can have complete control over the accessibility of an activity asking them to consider the accessibility of the course at large. Additionally, in considering ERT and the current model of OWI that tends to prioritize video conferencing in lieu of face-to-face teaching, instructors can model participatory design by allowing students to make various hierarchical choices, such as who is a host in Zoom or whether screen sharing

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is available only to the host. As Sherwood et al. (2021) note in their work on trauma-informed and culturally responsive pedagogy, making use of gallery views in web conferencing software such as Zoom can be ways to speak to students' voices and choices. In this way, students are brought further into the design process and allowed to insert themselves into the conversation in the spirit of cripping educational technology (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019).

Recommendation 3: Selecting an Accessible LMS

If online instructors are allowed their choice of LMS, then they can select one whose design complements pedagogical practices that model the stages of participatory design. At the time of this writing, Blackboard recently launched Blackboard Ally, which "helps institutions build a more inclusive learning environment and improve the student experience by helping them take clear control of course content with usability, accessibility and quality in mind" (Blackboard, 2020). Some of its features include providing alternative formats for course content and accessibility suggestions to instructors, which can be particularly helpful for those who previously received little or no technological training in creating accessible materials for online courses. Although Oswal (2015, p. 262) argues that "we have not yet seen an LMS that offers multiple interfaces for interaction to users with diverse characteristics, learning styles, and adaptive devices (e.g., screen readers, head pointers, zoom software, and the like)," Blackboard Ally holds promise in offering such options. However, we recognize that other LMSs are also making inclusive moves. For example, Canvas includes built-in accessibility features that test the overall accessibility of not only the course shell but also the uploaded documents, images, et cetera. This is a strong move toward inclusion, but recognition by the instructor of the implications of these moves is important.

We must keep in mind Oswal's (2015, p. 282) argument that "accessibility does not stop with technology; it must become a part of curricular and pedagogical thinking." Much like usability checklists, Blackboard Ally's and Canvas's built-in accessibility features can likewise risk presenting "course design as something to be checked off" (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017, p. 67) if (online) instructors rely passively on its features alone. This is why

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any training on an institution-approved LMS and/or other digital technologies for classroom use needs to be "pedagogically grounded" to help instructors understand the cultural and political aspects of these interfaces and how they can support writing goals (Rodrigo & Ramírez, 2017, p. 315; refer also to Griffin & Minter, 2013; Hewett & Bourelle, 2017). Training in technology is only the beginning of designing accessible course shells and content, and it requires instructors to recognize that the technologies that they adopt are not neutral (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017).

Recommendation 4: Recognizing Student Labour

One concern of many instructors is the labour that students perform in the course and, in the case of the interventions mentioned above, the labour that students are expected to perform that lies, perhaps, outside the purview of the course. In this case, it is important to recognize their labour and to "pay" them for it. Stevens, for example, teaches classes that include the above interventions with a labour-based grading contract (Danielewicz & Elbow, 2009; Inoue, 2015, 2019) that explicitly recognizes the work that students are performing. Another simple choice is to include these interventions within the course structure and to assign points that allow students to recognize that this labour matters in the larger context of the course.

Conclusion

Since FYW courses can reach almost every student at the university level, providing a participatory design structure to the OWC is beneficial for the accessibility concerns of the students enrolled. Adopting the stages of participatory design can also help students to become "'successful insiders'" (Powell, 2009, p. 677) by making the tacit expectations of the instructor, the course, and the university explicit to them, which in turn boosts student retention. Doing so can support not only students with disabilities but also those who identify as non-white, first-generation, English-language learners, and/or non-traditional students. Mina Chun's chapter in this collection, "Poetic Journeys: College Students with Disabilities Navigating Unanticipated Transitions during the Pandemic," offers an

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example of a participatory approach that centres students' voices in the classroom through poetic inquiry. To add to this work, we call for future research to explore additional ways that online instructors can explicitly follow in terms of the stages of participatory design while also providing recommendations for accessibility that consider the needs of students with mental health disorders such as anxiety as well as those with physical disabilities. In this way, both OWI and course design can not only take further strides in accessible, inclusive, online learning environments but also expand the ways in which students can collaborate with instructors as co-designers of these environments.

Notes

1 Although a content management system (CMS) and a learning management system (LMS) are sometimes used interchangeably, we use LMS to connote "an integrated set of software/programs that automate the administration, tracking and reporting of online courses/programmes" over CMS, largely used for data access and storage (Ninoriya et al., 2011, p. 645).

2 By "disability," we mean a socially constructed identity marker. We recognize that social constructionism "can be used as a method of silencing" (Dolmage, 2017, p. 54) and that "those who expose these realities might be blamed for them or disbelieved as the university secures itself" (p. 55).

3 Although in this chapter we focus on pedagogical interventions with the LMS Blackboard, required by the university, we acknowledge that the same focus on usability can be applied to other LMSs, such as Canvas and Moodle.

4 In prioritizing accessibility and inclusion, it is also important to note that "expressing" in this context is used in a variety of ways to prioritize students' comfort level when approaching accessibility concerns. Since the course is asynchronous, discussions appear in text form primarily and vary from public (discussion board) to private (journal function) conversations or written emails.

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9 Making Accessible Media

An Interview

Nathan Whitlock and Anne Zbitnew

In July 2015, faculty from the Media Foundation program at Humber College in Toronto were informed that an incoming student had requested that all videos shown in class be captioned. This request raised the question of how Humber College, as a learning institution that draws in a very diverse group of learners, could be more prepared for such requests. And, beyond that, how could the college be proactive, instead of reactive, with regard to issues of accessibility?

Motivated by that question, and by a desire to provide all students with a flexible and accessible learning experience, a small team of faculty and staff embarked on an online, public pedagogy project that focused on accessibility, called Making Accessible Media (MAM). This open-access course offers training in making digital media inclusive and accessible and demonstrates why creating such content is a social responsibility that needs to be owned by all. MAM consists of six modules—Accessibility, Representation, Audio and Video, Digital Design, Interactive Design, and Real Time Events—and includes case studies, spotlights, tasks, and knowledge checks throughout. All media that we created for MAM are captioned, described, and have American Sign Language (ASL) video as well as an exploration of the aesthetics of accessibility with experimental creative captions and integrated described video.

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This chapter is a conversation among key members of the team behind the project: Humber Faculty of Media and Creative Arts (FMCA) Professors Anne Zbitnew, Mike Karapita, and Jennie Grimard; Digital Learning Developer Lichuan Wen; and former Director of Digital Learning Mark Ihnat. The team members describe the origins of the MAM project, its shifting goals, and their shifting roles within it. They also reflect on the broader questions of their own lived experiences with both online education and concepts of accessibility, of the limits and challenges of creating fully accessible media and communications, and of the opportunities created by new legislation on accessibility.

Before MAM: Experiences with Online Learning and Accessibility

Zbitnew: I took a number of online courses when I was a disability studies student at Toronto Metropolitan University. Some of them were really good; some of them were really terrible. The terrible ones were the ones where you access the course on the first day of class, and everything has already been posted—you just follow the dates and hand things in without any engagement from the teacher or any discussion or collaboration with any other students.

I did take some very good online courses, too, though. One of my favourites was a course about the representation of disability in the media. There were many ways to engage in the course. The instructor, Eli Clare, would post an image and have us deconstruct it as a group. Or we'd listen to a clip of a podcast or watch a video and discuss what we thought the person was saying. It was fun and interesting because it wasn't just reading and writing.

Ihnat: I took some online courses while I was a Humber employee, taking on the student role. I completed several of the online Teaching Effectiveness Certificate program courses and a few similar workshops and courses offered through what was then called the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Humber. Up to that point, I had never been a true online student beyond doing my own

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massive open online courses (MOOCs) and a few other courses just for fun.

The MOOCs, in particular, were often quite dated: read content, post to a discussion board, read content, post to a discussion board—not unusual, unfortunately, for many online courses. There weren't a lot of expectations beyond that.

At that time, issues of accessibility were barely on my radar. Some of the ideas around basic web accessibility were colour contrast, size of font, that kind of thing. But, to the degree that we understand accessibility and even Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles today, I wasn't thinking at all about that.

Grimard: I recently took online courses at the Ontario College of Art and Design for my Master of Inclusive Design studies. For some courses, all the content is prerecorded: the instructor creates videos with her slide decks and a voice-over. After watching these videos, we participate on discussion boards. This isn't the best learning environment for me. I'm a big believer in the dynamic of the room, which is why a lot of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act training I do is in person.

Before working on the MAM project, I had very little knowledge of accessibility issues, which is part of the reason why I wanted to be part of this team. I had an idea of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines requirements and a vague sense of why we needed to make things accessible but no in-depth knowledge.

The Beginnings of the MAM Project

Zbitnew: In the first photography class I ever taught, in 1995, I had a student with a moderate intellectual disability who came to class with a facilitator. In that first class, I asked students to go out with cameras and take some pictures. Then the next week, when we looked at the photos, they were all pretty good, but the ones that were really quite great were those of the student with the disability. That made me think that we tend to privilege reading and writing as tools of communication but given a camera and some

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instructions many people can tell stories, they can communicate, even without words.

In 2016, I went to a one-day conference on accessibility and inclusion at the Ontario College of Art and Design, where I attended a presentation by Richard Cavanagh, who is the CEO and funding officer of the Broadcasting Accessibility Fund. It got me thinking about the idea of building something that was open access, online, inclusive, and accessible, that would teach people how to make their broadcast media accessible and inclusive for all Canadians, including our students in the FMCA at Humber.

I put together an advisory board of disabled people and people with lived experiences for the project. I needed to understand from as many people as possible what we needed to do to develop this project.

The next step was writing the grant application, and in August 2016 Humber was awarded a $130,900 Broadcasting Accessibility Fund grant to build the course.

Ihnat: Anne came to me and said, "Mark, I just got a pool of money to build something really fantastic." I was impressed with the grant but wondered how my team would fit into the project. She needed the Digital Learning team. The topic itself excited me because I thought at that time that we weren't doing enough in the area. I thought it would be beneficial to my entire team to be exposed to a project like this because we were just kind of getting our feet wet when it came to accessibility and UDL. We knew that accessible e-learning ensures that all potential students, professors, and instructors have fewer barriers to participate in web-based learning activities and online courses. And we also knew that it was a requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act to accommodate people with disabilities in teaching and learning. Ontario is the first province in Canada to pass a law that mandates accessibility standards, with the goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act lists rules for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that people with disabilities can

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access, giving those who may not have had the chance to learn and be active in their communities opportunities to do so.

Grimard: Initially, my role was simply to make graphics and select images for a website. But based on the content Zbitnew was developing, we had to start thinking about how people would engage with the material. Maybe we need a video here to make this more interesting? Maybe this is too long? And so my role evolved and changed, and I began to act as a consultant in terms of how we would present Zbitnew's content. We worked together to develop the assessments, which needed to be worthwhile and demonstrate learning but not involve writing an essay. By the end of the project, I was the graphic designer, project manager, one of the content contributors, and the French translator.

Wen: I was a web design student in the FMCA, and I learned my skills there, so I felt quite honoured to be part of this project and wanted to try my best to do my part.

Building MAM

Ihnat: The learning curve early on was pretty steep. It was a unique build—we had Zbitnew as the content creator and expert, and Grimard on the graphics side, and we had Li Wen from my team on the coding side. Wen is a wonderful coder, but building and coding in this way is different, so it really challenged her. Juan Olarte, the accessibility consultant, was vetting content and vetting the experience. And even *he* was stumped in some cases. So everyone learned together. Everyone who was involved in the project was accommodating and open to the vision. We all wanted to see something beautiful come out of it.

Zbitnew: This course, and all the information in it, come from hundreds and hundreds of people—people I know, the advisory board, the consultants, the team, academic literature, the research we all did. It all fed this initiative. I've been teaching for long

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enough to know how to build a course, and I know how to take that course and write it out on a piece of paper, but the idea of putting it online? I had no idea what to do. One of the first things that we did was come up with the idea of *modules*. We came up with six modules that would speak to different aspects of making media accessible. We wanted these modules to work together but also to stand alone so learners could customize their experiences. The modules could be done in any order, depending on what and how learners wanted to learn.

Grimard: In the early days of the project, we worked with an instructional designer who helped us to determine the right template for the e-course. The content was created with a particular e-learning template in mind, but it became pretty clear that the variety of content that we wanted to showcase required a lot of customization. There were a lot of miscommunications: Zbitnew and I would meet to massage and tweak the content to make it fit our vision, and then there would be a series of emails sent to Wen, the web developer. We were also working with an accessibility consultant who was checking each module after we finished it to make sure it was compliant. Poor Wen was getting emails from everybody, and it got overwhelming and confusing for her. She'd get an email from one person that said "Do X" and then an email from someone else telling her to do the opposite.

Wen: I think the team roles/responsibilities were not very clear at the beginning. Everyone wanted to do their best, and wanted to contribute their all to this project, but that meant we ended up with too much information, direction, editing, from too many sources. After everyone's responsibility got clarified, we formed a clear working plan. We were working simultaneously with images, code, and text, so we had to be very clear with each other and would communicate in person right away if things got mixed up.

Zbitnew: We worked with Juan Olarte, an accessibility consultant with over 20 years of experience who really challenged us. We would complete a section and think we were done; then he would

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check it and send back a few dozen pages of notes on things that needed fixing. Juan was very thorough and found things that we hadn't even thought of, such as making tasks and knowledge checks accessible to as many people as possible. For example, Juan reminded us that some of our audio tasks might not be accessible to people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing even with transcripts. With Juan's recommendation, we acknowledged in the home page that the course is written in plain language, but there is also the use of media terminology and jargon, and noted that some of the tasks may not be accessible to everyone.

Grimard: Working with Juan Olarte definitely gave us a different perspective. We were using online accessibility checkers and building the course to be as accessible as possible, but then Juan—who has lived experience and expertise—would tell us, "Yes, it works, but here are some of the challenges, and here are some ways it could be better." Juan suggested we try to include a broad range of users as much as possible. We knew that we would have transcripts, captions, sign language interpretation, and write in plain language, but we also learned about website navigation tools for people who are blind or have low vision or people with mobility impairments. Bringing the accessibility consultant to the project right from the beginning would have been better. What we did was build a module, code it all, finish it, and then have the consultant look at it. We built everything with inclusivity in mind, but having the consultant involved in the process earlier on would have saved us from having to go back and undo or redo things.

There were multiple occasions when I wouldn't quite understand the feedback we would get. I really wanted to understand where the accessibility consultant was coming from, so I started going to accessibility conferences and events. That helped me to identify my own limitations in terms of understanding and areas that still required development. I realized that there are still a lot of things that we're trying to figure out in terms of accessible web development.

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Ihnat: Even Juan was stumped in some cases. So everyone learned together.

Zbitnew: From day one, Grimard had a design idea in mind. She did all the research about contrast, colours, and fonts, so the website looked beautiful right from the beginning. Every time we added a module, it felt as though we were seeing exactly what we'd been hoping to see. And then Wen put into action what Grimard was designing. All of Wen's code for the site is open access because, when we talk about access, something like this needs to be accessible to everybody. Anyone can use the code. Watching Grimard and Wen work together was amazing, because Grimard would want something that Wen had never done before, and Wen would try a number of different approaches. She would experiment and ended up making things that didn't even exist.

Wen: I researched many ways to make the page readable. Existing screen readers such as JAWS could not solve this problem: once it is embedded into a learning management system (LMS), it does not work well. Finally, I created a text-to-speech screen reader by leveraging Google's text-to-speech technology. It's free, bilingual (French and English), doesn't need to be downloaded, and can be controlled by a keyboard. Moreover, even when the course is embedded into a learning management system, the screen reader works very well.

Zbitnew: The accessibility toolbar that Wen created is now being used in all of Humber's online courses. She also built in a screen magnifier that can enlarge areas of the screen. None of that was in our minds at the beginning, but we all pushed and challenged each other, and we all tried things we had never done before.

Grimard: There were always things we were changing in the site—bringing in new resources, switching out videos, et cetera. We kept changing it up until the day it was launched.

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Integrating Disability Representation

Zbitnew: The module we wanted to start with was about the representation of disability in the media. Because, before you learn how to make media accessible, you need to know why you make it and who it's for. In that first module, we also have a language guide. One of our amazing team members is Mike Karapita, who teaches journalism at Humber. Karapita has been a journalist for 30 years; he knows his stuff. He worked for years at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and knew that the CBC had its own language guide, so he put our language guide together.

Karapita: The CBC's language guide has, for decades, been used every single day by people across Canada and is very useful in solving day-to-day questions on language and style. When I really started taking a hard look at it in the context of this project, however, I realized that we could expand on it, because while it was an all-purpose guide it was not specifically designed for making media accessible. So we really had to make our own.

Designing a language guide for a project like this is a never-ending project. Working with the team, we identified the main kinds of words and areas we wanted to cover and address, and we looked at what existing guides were out there, not just at places like the CBC, but also at universities, colleges, advocacy groups—any kind of institutional language guide that has been posted on the internet. It was like an online scavenger hunt for information. You come up with terms, and then you realize some of those terms are not correct or are outdated, so you change your language, you refine.

Zbitnew: There were sometimes conflicting opinions within the advisory board on particular language or terminology, so we would go back and forth, talking these issues through. For example, some people preferred capital-D *Deaf*, and others wanted us to use lower-case *deaf* and *hard of hearing*. There was a fair bit of back and forth about the word *crip*, with some advisory board members very

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much disliking the term and others insisting it be used. Sometimes we would compromise, sometimes we'd include more than one term, and sometimes we would simply leave a term out. These are live, changing, dynamic issues. They aren't historical issues that you just want to clarify and for which you have the data.

Karapita: I think for each of us on the team, we expanded our own understanding and knowledge exponentially. And a lot of that stems from the realization that the people who almost certainly have the best answers on identity and experience are the people themselves, not outside authorities or areas of opinion. You get much better buy-in, from anyone you're working with, if you say "Tell me about yourself. *You* take the lead. *You* tell *us* what needs to be said and done here."

Reflections on the MAM Project

Grimard: A project like this is a living, breathing thing. It's never finished. Any online course needs to be constantly updated, revised, and changed, so we may never stop working on MAM.

Karapita: I think, whenever you work with a project with this kind of scope, you have to acknowledge that you need a starting point and a finishing point, at least in the framework of the project as it's currently envisioned. You do the best you can with those limitations, but you also build in the ability to keep your project going, keep it fluid, keep it updated. Terminology changes, technology changes, attitudes change, the world changes—and all we can do is to keep adapting and keep up to date. I think the real advantage of creating an online resource guide like the one we have in MAM is the ability to update all the time.

Grimard: In September 2019, we completed the third revision of the site and the course. We've added a lot of new content and moved modules around based on feedback from learners. We are planning another major overhaul and want to add new modules on web design and development guidelines, accessible video games,

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and a more robust discussion on the representation of disability in the media. But even before then, we are constantly going in and fixing typos, adjusting images, updating statistics, and that kind of thing. Sometimes links will stop working or videos have been taken down, so we must go in and update them.

When I'm teaching accessibility workshops, there may be learners only interested in captioning. Now I can give them the link to the course and say "Have a look at module three—that will give you a sense of what captioning is all about." Each module is a good introduction without being overwhelming.

Ihnat: Early on, Anne and I realized that there was only so much we could do in terms of the range of accessibility; we didn't know how to make the course accessible for everyone. In some cases, there was nothing we could do: there are definitely people that would still potentially struggle with the site. At some point, there are limits, and we hit them in terms of time and resources.

But we continue to tweak the MAM course and the other resources we developed as part of this project. For example, Wen's accessibility bar only understands two languages, French and English, but we're looking at developing a way to translate MAM into up to 70 different languages. The project has also inspired many of our online course builds—so many of our online students are benefiting from the project.

Grimard: I feel that we have made some significant changes just by starting the conversation with this project. More and more faculty are using it in their classrooms and introducing students to these concepts. That's what really makes me happy about being involved in this project: the fact that we started this ball rolling. There's so much more work to be done, but we kicked it off in our institution with this course.

Karapita: In terms of where this MAM project can go from here, it's open access, so other organizations can have it and use it whenever they want. Any institution can simply go to the public-facing website

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and run through the course on their own. I think online courses about accessibility built by Humber or by others need to be open access. It shouldn't be something that's going to make people millions or that gets held onto or has proprietary coding. For example, the accessibility bar that was built for this project is now fully available to anyone—it's available at our GitHub repository.

Zbitnew: I would love for this to become a mandatory course for postsecondary students across Canada. The text is written in plain language, the information is up to date and interesting, and it contains multiple ways of learning.

In 2019, we received another Broadcasting Accessibility Fund grant to create *Accessibility as Aesthetic: Three Films and a Podcast*, a series of accessible, open-access films and a podcast led by disabled black, Indigenous, and people of colour who are also media makers who creatively promote accessibility in their own broadcast projects. These disabled media makers led a cohort of senior-level students in creating the films and a podcast and in becoming industry leaders in inclusive production design. The films are included in the latest MAM update (September 2021).

We also recently received a generous grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage to research and develop an additional module for MAM that focuses on accessible book publishing—specifically, the integration of accessible publishing features into the production and distribution of digital books, providing an invaluable resource for Canadian publishers, designers, and production managers and increasing the availability of "born-accessible" books.

Karapita: We have a real advantage working within a postsecondary environment that values learning and teaching and that gives us time to develop these kinds of projects. It's heartening to know that work done in academia can then find direct applicability to non-academic centres. It would be great if MAM can be useful far beyond the college.

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Wen: I am much more confident when it comes to developing web pages that are compliant with legislated accessibility standards, and I believe I can do it even better than before. This project was a great chance to learn and improve myself.

Zbitnew: There are so many online courses that are just these ugly pages that you click and open, click and open, click and open. I wanted MAM to be accessible and inclusive but also beautiful. Because access doesn't have to be ugly. Just because we've always done something a certain way doesn't mean you can't try something different. That's what got me really excited about this project. MAM was just the start. The next big push is around attitudinal and systemic change.

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10 Moments of Reckoning in Learning and Belonging in Spaces of Postsecondary Education with/beyond COVID-19

Jessica Vorstermans and Elizabeth Mohler

For most educators and students, the abrupt transition to emergency online or remote learning was a rupture in their usual way of teaching and learning. In this chapter, we take up this rupture, the reckonings with this rupture, and how we might collectively move forward in more just and inclusive ways, rooted in and guided by the principles of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2016). Disability justice is an invitation to understand the world in a different way, a place to start and not an endpoint already imagined (Sins Invalid, 2016). It is a grassroots, community-created framework that was developed (and is developing) through the labour of Patty Berne and Mia Mingus, two queer disabled women of colour involved in transnational justice movements frustrated by how ableism still permeates these movements. They started creating and visioning with Leroy Moore, Stacy Milbern, Eli Claire, and Sebastian Margaret, and the framework of disability justice took shape. Disability justice is rooted in the imagining and labour of people of colour and queer and gender non-conforming disabled people, and it is a response to the failure of the disability rights movement to imagine and produce justice for all disabled people (Sins

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Invalid, 2016). Disability justice is the building of a world "in which every body and mind is known as beautiful" (Sins Invalid, 2016, p. 27). Disability justice asks each of us, from our own positionality, to work to create a world that challenges white supremacy, ableism, settler colonialism, and the violence of heteronormative capitalism.

Jessica

As an assistant professor at York University, and as I prepared my remote courses for fall 2020, I thought about how I wanted to centre equity and those who have been most affected by historical and current social and health pandemics. I wrote a piece that opens my syllabus and share the beginning of this statement here as slightly edited.

> We are all enrolled and learning in this course together, like our public health messaging throughout COVID: "We are all in this together." But we are all living this course and COVID in different ways based on our social locations and ways in which those social locations are valued or oppressed. For some of you, online learning is tough because it is hard to organize your time, for others you have increased care duties in your home and time to study is limited, for others you have been displaced from your home because of financial impacts of COVID and are struggling to keep moving through your degree. Each one of you is doing your best during a pandemic, and that is OK. These are painful times; many of you have experienced trauma through this pandemic and are living through the effects of this trauma. I have designed this course this semester to meet you where you are at in your journey. Each week on eClass [the learning platform] you will have different options to engage with the reading material for that week: a journal article, an editorial that is easier to read, or a video or podcast you can watch/listen to as you do a chore or have a baby on your lap. I know you are learning in difficult and strange times, and I have designed this course with that in mind; these are not "normal" times, so I will not be teaching like we are in "normal" times. We are going to challenge this idea of normal and how normal wasn't all that great for

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> many. Why, this time is calling us to construct a new and more just system that centres equity and does not return to the status quo. (Vorstermans, 2021a)

Rosi Braidotti (2020) asks us to think about the ways that structural inequities create the conditions that prevent us from being "all in this together." This has really been unveiled or revealed in deep and stark ways with COVID-19. As we moved along in the year, I received feedback from students enrolled in my courses that they appreciated the centring of their learning as *taking place during* the overlapping events of racial upheaval and COVID-19. Teaching from the knowledge that we are not all in this together, and indeed never have been, created a liberatory space that did the work of meeting students where they were at. As I move forward in remote and blended teaching, I want to continue to do this work and make space and opportunity for meaningful co-creation in order to deepen and widen experiences of access for students.

Elizabeth

As I entered fall 2020 as a PhD student, I experienced many barriers, including those related to inaccessible videos and online learning platforms. I experienced a reactive approach to addressing barriers to access rather than a proactive one because accessibility was assumed to be largely built into online learning content. The shift to online made learning more challenging in some ways because of the lack of digital access. At the same time, I have to acknowledge that the shift also created conditions that allowed me to flourish. Notably, the shift to online platforms of pedagogy and assessment created spaces for those who might experience physical barriers to access on campus. From a personal standpoint, moving to the online space meant not having to travel to campus. As a disabled student, it also meant that I could engage in a plethora of activities on campus that otherwise I would not have been able to engage in had I needed to go to campus physically. From this experience, I have learned that we can make a digital learning space possible in ways that are extremely functional for some students, particularly those who have been conceptualized in terms of access.

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Together

This chapter is a collaborative piece written by two scholars from different social locations and positions within the institution of postsecondary education. Elizabeth Mohler is a PhD student with a visual disability. Jessica Vorstermans is a tenure-track faculty member in critical disability studies. She is a non-disabled white settler who works within and against the colonial academic institution. We think, write, and work on Turtle Island and recognize that we relate to this land as white woman settlers, and we want to start by acknowledging the land. We both live and currently work in Toronto, the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississauga of the Credit, Anishinaabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Peoples and now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. As we teach and take up space in virtual classrooms, we are not all on the same land. The way that I, Jessica, have been acknowledging the land, as we are all on different land, is through collective labour. For my graduate seminar class, I ask students to sign up to facilitate the land acknowledgement each week, with one or two students holding each week. They prepare a land acknowledgement from the land on which they live and then, from their own positionality, take up ways in which they are in relation to the land, the treaties that govern the land, justice and resistance led by Indigenous people on those lands, and ways that they are calling for allyship and solidarity. It is a powerful way to start each class and brings different and essential knowledge into the classroom each week.

Reckoning

Early in the pandemic, Sonya Renee Taylor (2020) called on us to reckon with how we might imagine and build more generative futures in our post- or with-COVID world: "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature." Her call is to not return to the

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routines of ableism, racism, oppression, and harm. We ask you to think about this call in the context of how "returning to normal" is reproduced in the space of higher education. This chapter is guided by the work and calls of Dionne Brand and Rinaldo Walcott in how we each take up the struggle for equity, power, and narratives of belonging and care in the space of the neo-liberal university. Brand (2020) asks us to engage with the idea that "the reckoning might be now." We use this call to assert and interrogate the current and future reckoning(s) in the university to become the liberatory space that it asserts to be. Walcott (2020) reminds us that the university is a site of labour, injustice, and resistance. How do we work to deepen this moment of reckoning that COVID-19 has brought to this site? How do we centre the calls for equity from disabled students, black students, Indigenous students, students of colour, students at all of the multiple intersections of oppression who have been failed by and experience trauma in university spaces? Not a neo-liberal offering of equity, diversity, and inclusion that functions to reproduce the status quo of ableism, racism, and intersecting oppression but a space that affirms and welcomes all students as they are and how they learn (Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021). A space that recognizes the richness that all students bring with their lived experiences that allows them to engage in a critique of neo-liberalism that is rich and textured and gestures to the world that we want to build collectively beyond the reckoning.

The Entanglement

Here we take up tangible examples that engage with complications of how the roles of student and faculty (which at the graduate level can be embodied in one body) are affected, using a lens of relationality and ways that inequity is lived differently but also in tandem. We use this chapter to think through where collectively we can *take* these moments of tension in terms of creating meaningful access for all students and faculty. Can this kind of critical engagement push against the neo-liberal university's individualized equity, inclusion, and diversity framework that leaves it up to individual instructors to enact change? In other words, can this critical engagement move us beyond accommodations? Through

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our experience, we argue that the university is failing both faculty and students and that collaborative work together inside this site of labour, oppression, and struggle is the only path forward. How do we do this relationship work of building in an environment that does not lend itself to this kind of work?

This chapter engages in the entanglement of the student and professor roles and how they are both affected by neo-liberal logics that constrain them in liberatory practices in the university and can work in collaboration in resistance to these logics. COVID-19 has unveiled the deepness of inequity in our systems (Cherry et al., 2021), a deepness that many students with lived experiences of oppression have already known and called out. Cheuk and Ignagni (in Chapter 7 of this volume) take up materializing access and how power is organized in higher education spaces. Access needs deemed not feasible or non-essential before are now common because of the pandemic; classes are streamed online and recorded; there is increased flexibility in pedagogy and assessment, making access possible for those unable to engage in this space in pre-COVID-19 times. As noted in the foreword, we collectively moved toward more expansive ways for students to learn. Will postsecondary institutions maintain this kind of access beyond COVID-19? How do we work collectively to protect these access points and push this moment of reckoning into more just futures within universities?

Who Does the Labour of Creating Access?

Dolmage (2015, 2017) invites us to consider access and accommodation not as boxes to check off but as places in which to start thinking, doing, acting, and moving. Under the banner of Universal Design, efforts have been made to integrate proactive and inclusive approaches in universities and colleges, approaches that aim to create various flexible strategies that address the needs of all students. Such approaches were designed to challenge the ableism that traditionally has structured access, accommodation, and learning, but Dolmage (2015) documents how Universal Design has become a buzzword that forms part of reductive formulas and checklists. University administrators are not engaging with this approach

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in a critical or active way (Dolmage, 2015, 2017). This checklist approach to dealing with access and accommodation undermines the rhetorical objective of Universal Design as a form of action and activism (Dolmage, 2015). Invariably, the push toward the universal necessitates the conceptualization of space as "multiple and in-process"—a specific pattern of engagement and effort (Dolmage, 2015, p. 2).

The design component of Universal Design sheds light on the importance of inclusivity in the production of space and indicates how students must play a central role in this negotiation (Dolmage, 2015). If Universal Design is approached in a formulaic way, then it undermines such opportunities. Dolmage (2005, 2009) has pointed to the importance of linking Universal Design with principles of usability to achieve a more iterative pedagogical design that addresses the needs of students in a more tangible way and offers them more room to participate in the process of negotiation. In Chapter 8 of this volume, the authors consider Hamraie's (2016) thoughts on Universal Design and stress the importance not only of Universal Design and usability but also of user-centred design practices, such as participatory design. However, this participation should not equate to the downloading of responsibility to students in the neo-liberal university since this presents a unique set of learning challenges for disabled students. For instance, one of the first representations of disability is typically seen in a legal statement at the end of a syllabus that informs students of their responsibility to secure the required paperwork for their course in their own time. Here is a vignette of how this challenge can play out: *Student*: Could I please have the syllabus for this course? *Instructor*: I just got hired! I'm precarious! I don't have it yet! *Student*: Here is how that affects me: I don't have access to the course outline, which makes it difficult to attain information about what modules are on offer in my course. I cannot make a choice if I do not have the information to do so.

These moments are complicated since the neo-liberal university has moved to a model of contractual, precarious teaching labour. Contract faculty are often told that they will teach a course weeks or even days before the term begins, and contract teaching does not provide a stable or viable income, so contract faculty often work at multiple jobs, contracts, and institutions. Women and BIPOC contract faculty are over-represented

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in lower-income categories, and the precarity and instability of contract labour have disabling impacts on mental health (Foster & Birdsell Bauer, 2018). This reliance on precarious labour creates barriers for disabled students because the labour conditions are not set up in a way that allows for early access to syllabi, reading lists, and online learning materials and accommodations such as extended assignment deadlines and alternative assignments that can be seen as extra and onerous labour.

Following Ramirez (2019) in this paragraph, we note that alongside the fact that disabled students might be physically prevented from accessing vital information is the issue that, even for disabled students who can self-manage, there is often a lack of information about existing supports to assist them in managing their access needs. In this sense, it becomes apparent how, from the beginning, disability is constructed as a negative, legal, and medical concept. The offloading of responsibility to students with disabilities also extends to expectations of managing their own accommodations and access needs. Many universities conceptualize the accommodation process through discourses that emphasize the importance of self-advocacy among young adults while providing few resources that students can access and learn from. As part of the accommodation process, students must engage with university administrators and college professors, many of whom are largely unfamiliar with disability.

The hurdles experienced by disabled students also pertain to the extensive paperwork required for accommodation. Although universities might offer disability services that assist with this accommodation, such services often use high standards that can be problematic for newly diagnosed students who might be unfamiliar with accommodation lingo. There is also the issue of the limited number of accommodations that often do not align with their individual programs of study. Some students might need to access the resources and devices that they require to succeed in the postsecondary educational environment, but more often than not the process of accommodations serves as another Kafkaesque hurdle that disabled students must overcome. Ultimately, this process is accompanied by roadblocks that can be overcome depending on the tenacity of the student. For instance, disabled students must have a strong support

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system, the backing of their professors, and medical practitioners willing to provide support in the form of a legal note for the process of accommodation. Amid these unique challenges experienced by disabled students, accessibility is widely conceptualized as an individual responsibility as opposed to a collective one.

Difficult Conversations and Ways Forward: A Collective Responsibility

The emerging literature on the rapid and unexpected shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the disparities in how students experience higher education. Sublett (2020, p. 1) reminds us that "higher education is unmistakably stratified by race." Of course, this predates the COVID-19 pandemic, which we can understand as more of an unveiling (Brown, 2017; see also Cherry et al., 2021) and deepening of the stratification of inequity. The interconnecting systems of racism, ableism, patriarchy, and classism, which structure higher education, are on full display but nothing new, and students and faculty living at various intersections of oppression have made this known well before the pandemic. Research on students' experiences of teaching during the pandemic shows this unveiling and deepening (Gillis & Krull, 2020). The shift to online learning has meant a reliance on digital proctoring solutions for online exams, as Dolmage notes in the foreword to this volume. For authors such as Siddiquei and Kathpal (2021, p. 812), these solutions are necessary because, in an online learning environment, an educator is not present to "make the student vigilant." However, these solutions rely on algorithms steeped in racism and ableism to monitor and identify who is cheating.

There have been reports of digital proctoring systems instructing students of colour to move to more well-lit areas (Watters, 2020) and penalizing students who are neurodiverse or students with autism through software that tracks how often one's eyes move from the screen (Swauger, 2020). These digital surveillance systems enact pedagogies of punishment, a "eugenic gaze," and are increasingly relied on as higher education occupies space online (Swauger, 2020). Swauger (2020) reminds educators that we have an obligation to "object, resist, and subvert these systems,

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to push towards a practice that embodies justice, liberation, and love, and to remain vigilant for the next technological 'solution' that promises to 'fix' students or education."

Fuentes and co-authors (2021) set out considerations for enacting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through the course syllabus, framing the course as a welcome to all students who have been marginalized in university spaces. They take up intersectionality, EDI in learning outcomes, diversity statements, decolonization of the syllabus, and making the syllabus family friendly. Noticeably missing is a consideration of access as a key piece of a welcoming syllabus, providing essential information on access points and ways that access is enacted. Abney and Conatser (2020) take up ways to make virtual discussions engaging, effective, and equitable. They invite instructors to have an open conversation on the differences in virtual discussions (versus in-person discussions). Naming the differences and sitting with them comprise an important step in the process of making sense of spaces and entanglements with (in)equity but do not go far enough. We need to centre and name the complexities of access to in-person spaces, the complexities of reproductions of ableism and other oppressions in virtual spaces, as we engage in discussions about building spaces.

Reinholtz and colleagues (2020) document seven strategies that they used in the transition to remote pandemic teaching to encourage equitable participation. Although they come from an interdisciplinary community, they take the strategies up in the context of teaching biology. The strategies re-establish norms, using student names and breakout rooms, leveraging chat-based participation, using polling software, creating an inclusive curriculum, and cutting content to maintain rigour. Their research did not show differential gendered or raced impacts on students' participation, and they concluded that "as instructors became more comfortable with the technological tools they suddenly had at their disposal—polls, reactions, chat, breakout rooms, and whole-class discussion—their use of mechanisms for students to participate proliferated. Of course, these tools do not necessarily promote equity, but when they are used in intentional ways (such as scaffolding the breakouts or elevating the chat participation), then they become powerful tools in service of equitable teaching"

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(p. 12). The intentional labour behind enacting equity is foregrounded here, and their work highlights the importance of a community of practitioners as central in their mobilization of equity.

The literature on remote and online teaching that has come out of pandemic times as we collectively experienced a sudden shift to remote teaching in March 2020 has not (thus far) centred disability justice as a site of struggle and a path forward, although it is relevant to note that there has been work to document pedagogies informed by care ethics and trauma (see Bozkurt, 2021) as well as anti-oppressive pedagogies (Migueliz Valcarlos et al., 2020). However, without a centring of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2016), we will not unmake a system that harms and oppresses bodies and minds. A centring of co-creation or a participatory approach as in Chapter 8 seems to be essential to note here: that is, asking students which types of pandemic pedagogy work best for them as we chart what online learning looks like in a post- or with-COVID-19 world and then creating access together, as students and faculty. Jay Pitter, a black place maker and urban planner, talks about a growing emphasis on equity and lived experience of those most marginalized in conversations on urbanism. She talks about revealing one's own vulnerability in these conversations from those marginalized and targeted. And she claims that this can be done in a healthy way that respects boundaries and one's own narrative: "Your vulnerability is a gift, it isn't owed to anyone" (2021b). Pitter encourages folks to "protect parts of your story that are especially tender or unhealed" (2021a) and asserts that "equity-seeking groups should not be made to perform their pain to punctuate a point or to advance change" (2021b). The co-creation of what access needs to look like in our learning spaces in our post- or with-COVID-19 world should be guided by Pitter's reminders about vulnerability and be mobilized only when there are institutional commitments to change. Co-creation without safety, without respect for personal narratives and stories, without a commitment to actually building what is being called for is exploitative and harmful. We need to make sure that we are not just "plugging leaks" in neo-liberal ideologies (Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021).

A discourse reproduced in many EDI spaces that I, Jessica, have been a part of at my university as a faculty member is that online spaces are less

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than or not as effective as in-person spaces, without meaningful engagement with a discussion that in-person spaces are also inaccessible and not effective for many disabled, BIPOC, queer, and targeted students. This is the discussion that we need to have, and it needs to be rooted in disability justice praxis (Sins Invalid, 2016). It is not an either/or discussion but a nuanced discussion that takes up how learning in higher education, whether in-person or online, is a site of oppression for targeted students and how reckoning with this is our collective work within the confines and constraints of the neo-liberal university. And then we must chart the way forward using disability justice as an organizing principle (our praxis informed by our intersecting identities and where we are called to work/be/lead), led by those living with disablement in the university.

Collective Futures: Disability Justice, Co-Creation, and Trusting Students

In this chapter, we have unpacked some challenges of accessible teaching and learning for disabled students in the context of neo-liberal universities. Invariably, such universities are predicated on specific ideals of the individual, such as Cottom's (2017) "roaming auto-didact" able to succeed through their own effort and determination. The promotion of this ideal means that, in the postsecondary educational context, asking for help invariably becomes understood as a problem. Disabled students are produced as the problem instead of the institutional barriers inherent in the neo-liberal university. Reid and Shanouda (Chapter 1 of this volume) take up this ideal student and the implications of this reproduction for a pedagogy of care and radical love born at this time of pandemic upheaval.

Access to learning for disabled students can be improved if it is perceived as a collective responsibility. A collective approach would produce novel frameworks and practices that aim to ensure that all individuals have access to learning. We respond to Dionne Brand's (2020) call for COVID-19 as a moment of reckoning with our own complicity in the oppression of the university (this looks different for each of us based on our positionality) and a moment to hold each other close as we unveil the harms and

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oppressions of this site of struggle (Brown, 2017). Principles of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2016) can guide a collective approach centred on those most targeted in all of the spaces of neo-liberal higher education.

Understanding how the social organization of disablement functions in the university allows us to understand how those living at various intersections experience oppression (Gorman, 2016), how racism and ableism intersect and bear on specific bodies in specific ways. The explosion of wellness rhetoric and services for students on campus are often rooted in an assumption of whiteness. Counselling services are not safe for all bodies and minds; some are offered care, whereas others might be surveilled and put at risk. Gorman's (2016) *Disablement in and for Itself: Towards a "Global" Idea of Disability* was born from campus organizing at the margins of race and disability, a collective concerned with how disability justice is being appropriated by the mainstream. These concerns must guide our reckoning, and our analysis must meaningfully engage with disablement and disability justice.

We posit that a collective responsibility in this context would be a start to imagining the plural ways that collective approaches can be stitched: rooted in the 10 principles of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2016), co-created by faculty and students in co-conspiratorship, and embedded in deep trust of BIPOC, disabled, and poor students and faculty so that we can move away from gatekeeping and surveillance in our classrooms and other institutional spaces (Kim & Stommel, 2018). We echo Stommel (2016; also this volume): "Start by trusting students." Trusting students needs to be held at the centre of our pedagogy—trusting that they know their own access needs, their own accommodations, their own ways of accessing learning best. One of the 10 principles of disability justice is leadership of those most affected: "We are lifting up, listening to, reading, following, and highlighting the perspectives of those who are most impacted by the systems we fight against" (Sins Invalid, 2016, p. 23). In the space of higher education, this means that EDI discussions should be led by those most affected by racism, ableism, and other intersecting oppressions. For example, those most affected by surveillance in the classroom should be at the table when institutions make decisions to purchase digital surveillance software or institute academic honesty policies.

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We think about this co-conspiratorship by students and faculty as if they are traitors to the neo-liberal university. We use the idea of traitors in the way that Alexis Shotwell (2020) asks white folks to be race traitors. Eugenia Zuroski (2018) calls for academic allyship, for white-identified faculty to join BIPOC faculty in building a new institution that deserves those whom EDI purports to serve, and to do this from the margins, foregrounding knowledge built outside centres of power. Sami Schalk (2021a, 2021b) reminds us of the massive toll that this kind of labour takes on BIPOC faculty, in this particular case black faculty. In response to the police killing of 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant in Ohio, Schalk's university asked faculty to make space for students to speak about it in class, extend deadlines, and accommodate them. Although she acknowledges the importance of this, what was missing was an institutional acknowledgement of how black faculty are also living this trauma, and supporting students at the moment is a more difficult and different kind of labour. So the collective co-creation must be meaningfully supported by institutions, acknowledging the disproportionate labour among BIPOC and disabled faculty to enact anti-oppression work within the institution.

Students collectively have taken up access work as a site of flourishing. They have also co-created spaces within which they hear and learn from one another. Research shows that students have begun to express interest in taking up participatory and active roles that permit them to work and interact collaboratively with educators (Bovill, 2020; Dollinger et al., 2018). Students should be seen as active and invaluable participants included in co-creation processes in which their opinions, feedback, intellectual capabilities, and personalities can be leveraged and integrated into institutional resources to offer value for both institutions and students themselves (Dollinger et al., 2018). Strategies of co-creation include the utilization of student resources through student organizations or unions, or through student involvement in the design of learning environments, and students have created university-related content through the leveraging of social media platforms (Dollinger et al., 2018). In more participatory approaches, students are playing a role in the design and development of initiatives, including the curriculum (Bovill, 2020; see also Chapter 8 of this volume).

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Co-creation of the curriculum, in particular, enhances shared reciprocity, responsibility, and respect among staff and students (Bovill, 2020). Co-creation of the curriculum means that students have some control through significant engagement in curriculum design in conjunction with faculty and through sharing control over some areas. Through negotiations, faculty can assume ownership of some dimensions of the curriculum, including quality assurance, but opportunities are still created so that students can have shared responsibility for decisions that affect what and how they learn. The opportunities for co-creation affect not only students but also faculty because reciprocity and respect for beneficial and innovative ideas emerge, with both actors learning from each other. Goldrick-Rab and Stommel (2018) remind educators that we need "more, not fewer, ways to listen for the voices of students reflecting on education," working our pedagogical approaches to serve the students whom we have in our classrooms and not the students whom we wish to have.

This co-creation must take into account disproportionate labour on BIPOC and disabled students and faculty, and be meaningfully co-created, not downloaded labour to those already disproportionately living with harm in the institution. I, Jessica, recently completed with my class a graded assignment in which students looked at academic honesty (a space that disproportionately can police and punish BIPOC, disabled, and poor students) using a structural analysis of why students breach academic honesty, some reasons being poverty and language barrier. The second part of the assignment was to come up with advice and ideas for students on how to navigate these structural failures, kind of an exercise in mutual aid. Then I made it into a living crowd-sourced document that I posted to our online class website for students to share, and I will keep adding to it as I teach the course each term (Vorstermans, 2021b). This is an example of co-creation that is meaningfully recognized (in this case graded and therefore compensated through grading), centres knowledge created at the margins and aims to serve future students to protect them from targeting by mechanisms of control in the neo-liberal university.

We began with Sonya Renee Taylor's (2020) powerful call not to return to the before times. Those times in higher education were times of oppression and trouble for many students and faculty living at different

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intersections. As we move into a post- or with-COVID-19 world, we have to collaborate to protect the pedagogical gains of the pandemic: the recorded lectures, the move away from large exams, the end of graded attendance, all parts of learning that can reproduce ableism, classism, and racism. Taylor asked us to dream of new, more just, and radical spaces of liberation, to create a new garment that "fits all of humanity and nature." We end with our desire to work at co-stitching this new garment in the space of learning in higher education. We acknowledge that it will be a struggle, that it will not be easy, but it will fit all of humanity and nature only if it is meaningfully co-stitched, centring and trusting the plural voices of students and faculty who historically have been at the margins.

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Conclusion

Lisanne Binhammer

We are not returning to the "before" times, and as we release this book technology is changing rapidly. This is the central *trouble* of our times as we continue to grapple with academic ableism and its evolving forms.

I was invited to co-edit this collection when I was a graduate student at Carleton University. I had just completed a thesis on entanglements between autistic girlhood and virtual reality, entirely online. I started and graduated from my program during COVID-19. Everything was remote; classes, department socials, and coffees with my cohort were all online. I was in Toronto. Most of my peers were a four-hour drive away in Ottawa, except for some who were entirely elsewhere. There was a woman in Spain who'd show up bleary-eyed on screen, joining lectures before dawn broke, and another in India who was similarly seemingly out of place and time.

I began reviewing the collection by reading Chelsea and Fady's reflections on their roles as teachers in an evolving landscape of digital pedagogy—at times critical, at times not. Because this is a collection about critical access in teaching and learning, I want to occupy space here; I want to share my story.

I made a conscious decision to study during the pandemic and applied for my program in the early days of lockdown. I was not ushered online like many whose educational plans were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I wanted to be online. It felt like the right time. While the

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world was coming to a shuddering halt, I could *start something new* and *get something important done*. And I could do my graduate work at home.

Studying during the pandemic made sense to me because I, like the students in the chapter by Collins, Smith, and Jeffery, believed that I was more suited to online education. Gone would be the difficulties of my undergraduate degree, in which generalized anxiety made it hard to get to class, let alone to be in class. Goodbye, confusing and challenging small talk. So long, crowded hallways and noisy lecture halls. I firmly believed that this would be better. I knew that, if I felt too overwhelmed during a class, I could shut my laptop. If a conversation with a professor felt too daunting, I could reschedule it. I could manage myself, and my needs, without needing to involve anyone else. Studying online made sense, I made sense, if I was—to borrow a word from Chapter 4—*invisible*. Of course, there was a sense of practicality in distance learning for me, as there was for Arzu-Carmichael in Chapter 2. I could remain in place while still studying with scholars whom I admired. But the truth be told, this was not *the* reason. Rather, I gravitated toward online learning because I saw myself as someone who didn't quite fit into traditional f2f learning environments.

This isn't to say that remote education didn't work for me; in many ways, as Mohler muses in Chapter 10, it "allowed me to flourish." However, this wasn't because of my neurodivergencies. Rather, the online environment regulated and rendered my disabilities invisible much the same way as an in-person one. Instead of hiding in bathrooms on campus, I was doing the same at home. Instead of meeting with professors to talk about accommodations in an office, I was asking for them over Zoom. For me, so many of the expectations of f2f learning were still there. The problem was never my disabilities; the problems were and are structural and institutional. These problems couldn't be solved with a move online.

Yet this is the trick that technology often plays on us. For Abdelnour (2015, p. 205), this is "an issue of techno-saviorism—the promotion of technology as a panacea . . . as having an incredible agency to solve complex social and environmental problems." The notion that technology can act as a balm or even a solution to deeply nuanced realities is something with which I am intimately familiar, having spent the decade prior

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to my graduate studies in the technology industry as a product designer. Techno-saviourism plays out rather evidently in the educational arena; for example, the One Laptop Per Child project from the MIT Media Lab stemmed from the idea that, if every child had their own laptop, then education would become accessible and attainable. However, since the unveiling of the project back in 2005 (Kraemer et al., 2011), One Laptop Per Child has struggled and shrunk because, according to University of California, Irvine Professor Mark Warschauer and Stanford University PhD candidate Morgan Ames, "it ignore[s] local contexts and discount[s] the importance of curriculum and ongoing social, as well as technical, support and training" (Kelleher, 2016, para. 5). The project has been critiqued in ways similar to the troubles articulated in this book: technical solutions, with their blanketed approach, can never provide equitable futures.

In the introduction, Jones and Shanouda distill the work of the contributions to this book as well as their lived experiences as students, staff, and faculty in higher education to point to the seven troubles of online teaching and learning. These troubles are points of tension, of complex truths that simultaneously reveal the concerning isms (ableism, racism, sexism) of higher education and show us where to begin our collective resistance to them. The chapters in this volume have told stories about these troubles and shed light on what an accessible critical digital pedagogy can look like now and in the future. Throughout the book, and in my own narrative above, the first trouble—that online pedagogy is or should be seen as a solution to the problems of inaccessible higher education—is established. When we teach and learn online, education is not suddenly made accessible; rather, as Collins and co-authors point out in their chapter, the same "neo-liberal ableist expectations about learning" tend to persist.

There is a misconception, to touch on the second trouble, that digital classrooms are universally accessible and available. This is proven false by Kathie's words in Chapter 6: "Due to my dyslexia, the words in e-books swim by on the computer screen." This is proven false yet again with the pedagogical quandaries faced by the authors of Chapter 5 at Utah Valley University. Content is another point of contention in assuming accessibility and availability in an online classroom. In Chapter 1, Reid

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and Shanouda discuss teaching difficult knowledge digitally and how it differs from an f2f learning environment. Teaching online isn't a matter of transferring content, or "neatly pour[ing] it into an online class," as noted by Stommel in Chapter 3. The way that this content is brought online matters. Online teaching and learning require, as Reid and Shanouda observe, a pedagogical approach politically rooted in care, love, and justice. Access and availability are active and interrelational; they depend on the how and what and who is teaching and learning.

The third trouble—that individuals are at fault when new modes of digital praxis fail—is at odds with the notion that teaching and learning are interrelational. Kendall's poem in Chapter 6 puts it simply: "Students should not only strictly depend on themselves." In Chapter 5, Garcia and Johnson relate feeling overwhelmed when they faced the provost's office: unending resources, training modules to complete, and frantic email after email. Although faculty training has been noted in this book as an important part of online teaching and learning, there is often a disproportionate burden placed on teachers and students. The pandemic-related shifts, as the fourth trouble notes, pushed this further by putting online teaching and learning in crisis with an unreasonable expectation of recovery. COVID-19 shuttered us all inside in unfamiliar situations and deeper precarity. The phrase "new normal" was meant to obscure the strangeness of it all and assumed that things would be manageable, even successful. Indeed, Garcia and Johnson speak to "quick changes" that they had to make "without any meaningful say in those changes." COVID-19 added, as the fifth trouble states, to the already unresolvable complexities of online teaching and learning. In Chapter 7, Cheuk and Ignagni observe the tension between "disability access as love . . . and the university's desire for access as capital through the inclusion of a greater quantity of students." A similar tension can be found between the existence of radical hope in higher education, as Reid and Shanouda describe, and the nature of learning that happens through a learning management system (LMS).

Morris and Stommel, in "If bell hooks Made an LMS," speak to how learning management systems—with which we all became intimately familiar during COVID-19—are "a symptom of a much larger beast . . . : the rude quantification of learning, the reduction of teaching to widgets and

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students to data points" (Stommel, 2017, para. 7). EdTech products tend to favour efficiency and automation of learning experiences. The sixth trouble expands on the role of online education in maintaining divides and reproducing structures of power; online teaching and learning are often falsely presented as apolitical and ahistorical, resulting in the erasure of crip, neurodiverse, and other digital creators' world making. As Reid and Shanouda put it in Chapter 1, online classrooms are not "spaceless and landless but . . . spaces where systems of power exist and unfold" and are "mobilized and exacerbated." In Chapter 7, Cheuk and Ignagni similarly highlight that framing online classrooms as "anytime anyplace" abstracts them from their social, historical, and political contexts. They unravel the narrative of their physical university; this narrative exists and is translated into the online environment along with the obscured but never neutral algorithms that bring an online world into existence.

The above are six of the seven troubles. They are and should be troubling enough to move us into the final trouble: the invitation to cause trouble online through active resistance to and reimagining of our digital futures. The chapters in this book provide a set of practical places, as Dolmage says in the foreword, about where to begin, how to push back, resist, do things differently, and become co-conspirators in cripping the university.

Before addressing this final trouble, however, I want to trace our current positioning, much like Jones and Shanouda do in the introduction. In the midst of writing this conclusion, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 no longer to be a public health emergency. The pandemic is now endemic. But, as Stommel notes, "our work has fundamentally changed" even as we attempt to "pivot" back to in-person education. We've realized new things in the past few years, we've found new ways of working, and we've discovered new tools. In the foreword, Dolmage asks "what did you do in your research environment in order to keep your research program going during the pandemic? Did some of these things increase access more generally? Can you keep doing those things?" Dolmage points to an infrastructure that we have started to build. We can't lose it now. We can't suddenly remove things that were working and are working.

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This is particularly important to think about now as the landscape of online pedagogy is changing yet again. We are at a new moment of reckoning. Artificial intelligence (AI), though it has been a part of our lives for some time now, has stepped more visibly into the public arena. In 2023, the Khan Academy—an EdTech non-profit that boasts 137 million users across 190 countries (Herold, 2022)—announced the soft launch of Khanmingo, an AI-powered learning tool meant to democratize student access to individualized tutoring and act as an assistant to educators (Singer, 2023). AI is here. Online teaching and learning are changing, and we are at a crucial moment. In *The Sentient Syllabus Project*, a substack authored by academics about the age of AI, they note that it is shifting paradigms in pedagogy within a matter of weeks; we can't rely on past research or even current research because everything quickly becomes outdated (Steipe, 2023). This is hard. The sense that we are beginning again is hard: there are new tools, new expectations, and new ways to think about access.

But I'd like to suggest that we aren't beginning again. In response to dealing with new pedagogical disruptions driven by AI, we should remember that "we have only one thing to go on: experience. And we have only one thing to work with: creativity" (Steipe, 2023, para. 3). Our collective experience in dealing with the pandemic, the troubles identified and the stories told in this volume, are part of a history directly transferable to how we deal with things now. The critical access-related themes in this book—disruption, care, and cripping—must influence how we respond to AI-powered pedagogy.

The final trouble in this book, like the first six, is woven throughout the chapters. The way that the authors speak about causing trouble online through active resistance to and reimagining of our digital futures speaks of a path forward as we navigate through the haze of AI. One such place in which to begin is offered in the very premise of the book and echoed clearly by Arzu-Carmichael in Chapter 2. We need to " ask questions not only about *which* students are served by online education but also *why,*" which calls attention to the rhetorics that shape our ideologies. This can look like questioning and examining guidelines and policies that existed prior to the pandemic or those being reinstated now. We must reflect on who and what is holding current power structures in place. If we don't do

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it now, then things will only become more entrenched. In Chapter 8, Stevens and McCall nod to Dolmage's work in 2017 that examines how higher education has viewed disability within the medical model. This viewpoint is indeed at risk of being further cemented with AI; Lillywhite and Wolbring, in their examination of how disabled people are represented in AI and machine learning literature, note that, "given the lopsided quantity of clinical/medical/health versus non-medical/clinical/health role, identity, and stake narratives related to disabled people present in the literature, one can predict that AI technology will learn a biased picture of disabled people" (2020, para. 56). We must resist ideologies about online learning that serve only to perpetuate deeply flawed assumptions.

From questioning and examining what is, we can move toward creating—or co-creating—digital spaces that embody pedagogies of care and love. Time and time again in this book, different authors have proposed what Stommel acknowledges in four words—"start by trusting students." Centring the lived experiences of those directly affected by higher education allows us to avoid the pitfalls of UDL creep and encourages students to become full participants in their education. Stevens and McCall speak to involving students actively in course design through goal/intention setting, frequent usability check-ins, and presenting course content in multiple modalities. Echoing Karpita's thoughts in Chapter 9, these are all examples of saying to students "Tell me about yourself. *You* take the lead. *You* tell *us* what needs to be said and done here." This sentiment is repeated in regard to surveillance EdTech in Chapter 10: "Those most affected by surveillance in the classroom should be at the table when institutions make decisions."

The student voices in this volume give us clues about where to begin; for starters, we can accept work in multiple formats or choose a single platform for submissions, as Kathie points out in Chapter 6. Of course, those most affected go beyond students and include faculty and staff. As noted in Chapter 3, there is an institutional responsibility to trust teachers. Morris provides the example of a new chancellor who started a "listening tour" during which she had open Zoom sessions to chat with and learn from staff and students. In Chapter 9, Grimard remarks on working with accessibility consultant Juan Olarte to create the MAM course: "We were using

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online accessibility checkers . . . but then Juan—who has lived experience and expertise—would tell us . . . here are some of the challenges, and here are some of the ways it could be better." Instead of top-down approaches or assumptions about lived realities, participatory approaches to online pedagogy can make space for us to avoid retrofits, as per Dolmage, and encourage the spirit of crip technoscience and collective access. As Newman-Griffis and co-authors (2022, p. 10) comment in "Definition Drives Design: Disability Models and Mechanisms of Bias in AI Technologies," "top-down technologies that impose a particular worldview of disability can reinforce and worsen existing inequities." It is important to note that a participatory approach, as Reid and Shanouda propose, "does not take place at one point in time but is ongoing, constantly in motion." Our commitment must be ongoing as we attempt to reimagine the ever-more-complex realities of online higher education.

In *The Sentient Syllabus Project*, the authors envision how AI will deeply unsettle higher education (Steipe, 2023). Importantly, they speak to the promise of personalization. With access to vast amounts of user data—such as academic records, assessment results, learning behaviour, and preferences—and through the use of pattern-detecting algorithms, an AI system could create custom content and provide individualized tutoring all through an interface much more intuitive to use than any LMS that exists today. It's easy to imagine that AI will resolve many of the troubles in higher education. It's also easy to imagine that new advances—with AI or other technologies—will only continue to abject those with bodymind differences. It has been happening in higher education for some time. Back in 2014, the UK Home Office accused thousands of international students of cheating on the Test of English for International Communication. An overwhelming number of students—2,500—were forcibly removed, and 7,200 more left the country (Gentleman, 2022). But the accusations by the Home Office were based on flawed data from a voice recognition algorithm (Morse, 2019). Vulnerable populations were thus harmed and continue to be harmed because of insufficient technological oversight (Grimm et al., 2021). Another problematic example of AI's use in higher education is mentioned by Casey Boyle (University of Texas) in "How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students with Disabilities" (McMurtrie, 2023). Boyle

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notes that some instructors have moved from take-home assignments to in-class timed assignments to prevent students from accessing ChatGPT. For Boyle, this is an instance of "increasing the slope" of the uphill work that students with disabilities are made to do (McMurtrie, 2023, para. 7). The presence of AI shouldn't remove the infrastructure crucial to access that, as Dolmage notes, we must "keep doing."

As Sherry Turkle noted back in 1991, technology challenges our understanding of the world and our place in it; computers "draw attention to how we have drawn the lines and in the process call them into question" (p. 227). In the context of online education, these lines—though always there—have become more apparent to everyone because of the pandemic and our collective and sudden saturation in everything digital. These technologies were revealed to be inaccessible, and the built-in ableism of online teaching and learning was made clear. The role of accessible critical digital pedagogy, as this book has established, is to politicize and centre access in the face of uncertainty and hope.

The seven troubles of this book, as articulated by its authors, offer up more than what is currently problematic or challenging with online pedagogy. As Jones and Shanouda note in the introduction—drawing from work by Cherry and colleagues (2021)—the purpose of this book is to move beyond critique to resistance. That is perhaps what drew me to it in the first place: it takes up the necessary if difficult work of examining how things are and exposing how they could be. As we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of higher education, we must continue to resist the notion that online pedagogy is the solution to academic ableism. Like this volume, we need to spend time untangling the current narratives told about pedagogy, technology, and bodymind differences and instead offer ways to retell these narratives, paving a path toward ongoing justice and collective liberation.

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policy documentation that allows for (or perhaps veils) oppressive and discriminatory systems that work specifically against the careers and overall advancement of multiply marginalized and under-represented authors and scholars.

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