The State of the Community: Foreign Language Students with Disabilities and Language Lab Technology

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Preface

More students with disabilities are entering colleges and universities than ever before. Public primary and secondary schools have prepared them to meet higher education entrance standards, but many now face an academic life without the mandatory support systems that enabled their achievements through the twelfth grade. As institutions into which students enter voluntarily, colleges and universities have the right to insist on the highest performance standards with out the obligation that public schools have to provide compulsory support services. As a result, college students with disabilities often meet faculty members unprepared to teach them or even recognize the different learning styles that they may bring to campus. Facilities and programs may pose similarly daunting hurdles, and students may not have the skills to locate, much less navigate, the maze of adaptive or assistive technology that might be useful to them.

This essay contends that ensuring accessibility is a fundamental responsibility of all professionals in higher education. Taking the position that access is an essential component of a quality education, the following discussion situates accessibility as both an unqualified right of an otherwise qualified disabled student *and* as a pedagogical approach that can enhance the learning of all students. A principled commitment to ensuring accessibility requires preparation and coordination among faculty, staff and administration so that the framework for access to the curriculum is in place when students with disabilities arrive on campus. The most essential factor in expanding accessibility is the recognition of students with disabilities as full-fledged learners who can achieve on par with their non-disabled peers. Acceptance of this basic premise can transform begrudging compliance with the law into an expansive pedagogy that benefits all students.

Accessibility has always been a component of effective teaching. In no college course would it be unusual for a student to ask a teacher to move a little to the left or the right in order to see what is written on the blackboard. It is hardly an affront to ask an instructor to repeat

what was said or to speak a little louder. These are gestures teachers make every day to make their courses accessible without regard to whether a student has a disability or not. Teachers want their students to engage with the material, and so they deliver it in the most effective manner possible, even when that requires making unforeseen last-minute accommodations. With advanced notice, some might gladly enlarge a handout or even record a lecture. But how far should educators go to make courses accessible, and what principles guide their decisions to purchase adaptive equipment or develop assistive technology? Is there ever a point at which those efforts come at too great a cost or are no longer justifiable?

Digital and multimedia technology can enhance accessibility tremendously, yet it is often unclear how to select the most effective tools and incorporate them wisely. Any listing of hardware or software is bound to be out of date very quickly. Far more important is the building of a community of knowledgeable and insightful partners. Thus, the first goal of my discussion here is to allow classroom instructors, language lab directors, and disability-related service providers to assess their needs and develop short and medium-range goals specific to their home institutions. My second goal is that these colleagues would in turn contribute to ongoing dialogues with their peers across the nation.

Discrete fields?

Foreign Language Acquisition, Disability Student Services, and Instructional Technology are well established fields at colleges and universities today. Each has its own professional standards, and each field's members are regularly engaged in developing their knowledge at conferences, or in books, articles, and web sites. Although significant numbers of individuals and organizations are clearly dedicated to these as discrete units, there is strikingly little dialogue among them despite many overlapping concerns. Two out of the three fields often merge: foreign language teaching now regularly includes instructional technology, and offices of disability student services also routinely rely on digital and audio-visual technology to support learning. What is now needed is collaboration among all three. As rapidly increasing numbers of students with disabilities enter our colleges and universities, today's foreign language teachers are expected to be skilled in addressing multiple intelligences and differing learning styles. The foreign language study required for most undergraduate degrees often poses an especially formidable hurdle for these students. It is critically important to coordinate the technology and pedagogy that will enable academic success and foster genuinely inclusive teaching. To my knowledge, the April, 2005 meeting of the New England Regional Association of Language Lab Directors (NERALLD) was one of the first, and possibly the very first to bring these professionals together under a common roof.[1]

One of the main reasons why we have not come together sooner is likely due to unease or confusion about what to say and what to ask. Moreover, there are so many experiences of disability that it is difficult to conceive of them as having any relation to one another. What does a person who is blind, for example, have in common with a person who uses a wheelchair? Just what is disability?

Two conceptual models offer answers to this question. The medical model has long explained disability as the result of disease or injury, defining it rather stringently as an issue of sickness or health. The response of choice has been for professionals, that is, medical doctors, to treat the impairment in order to improve health or return the individual to a better condition. The medical model now competes with the social model which, while acknowledging impairment, actively considers the critical role of the environment in shaping disability through societal barriers. The social model draws attention to the built world and advocates the removal of unnecessary barriers, be they in architecture, communications, programming, or attitudes. Both of these models inform contemporary pedagogical practices in the United States today. The medical model persists as the overarching authority, although the merits of a social model are increasingly apparent as we strive to minimize barriers on college campuses.

Because of these differing criteria for defining disability, certifying the numbers of disabled students at any given time is exceptionally difficult to do. Nonetheless, self-reporting by students who claim a disability does provide some idea of the demographics in higher education.[2] According to *Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Recent Data from the 2000 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey,* students with disabilities represent 9.3% of all undergraduates, or 1.53 million students. There is conflicting data of the make-up of this population, but *The 2001 Heath Report on College Freshmen with Disabilities* (the most recent data available) published by the American Council on Education finds that among freshmen students reporting a disability, 40% disclose a learning disability, 16% a visual impairment or blindness; 15% a "health-related" disability, and 7% an orthopedic disability. Another 17% of students with disabilities characterized themselves as "other" with regard to these categories. While other data suggests a much smaller incidence of learning disabilities (this figure depends on whether ADD and ADHD are included in the category), these statistics substantiate the widespread perception that the largest percentage of these students identifies as having a learning disability. At the same time, they raise questions that are central to the question of how to teach these students: many of these disabilities are "invisible," neither easily perceived nor easily categorized, yet may hamper considerably a student's progress in a course.

On campuses across the country, educators are taking a learn-as-you-go approach to finding appropriate materials and methods to teach students with disabilities. We have anecdotal evidence and a sense that more must be done, yet this ad hoc approach yields predictably spotty results. We need instead a principled approach to motivate and retain students with disabilities. When it comes to their learning, neither they nor their teachers should have to guess, finesse, or reinvent the wheel. We need to reflect upon and develop our knowledge about what disability is by turning anecdotes that we share informally into documented analysis. Finally, there is a great need for a bank of reliable, reproducible, and adaptable resources so that any student, teacher, advisor, or language lab administrator can find a viable answer to the question: where do I turn?

The word "community" has been invoked quite a bit lately and is often dismissed as a euphemism at best, or an overt political gauntlet at worst. I use the word here because it is exactly what I mean to say. There *is* a community of people dedicated to disability and foreign language, and there *needs to be* such a community. The existing community includes those colleagues gathered at the NERALLD meeting at Northeastern University. It includes students and graduates who have studied or even majored in foreign languages who communicate one-on-one with new students about their experiences. It includes colleagues from many departments at Syracuse University, whose *Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum*, just appeared in print.[3] It includes the faculty at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, whose PACE Faculty Resource Book serves as a model of access and inclusive teaching across the curriculum. It also includes the authors of the forthcoming book, *Worlds Apart? Disability and Foreign Language Learning*, which two colleagues and I are currently editing.[4] The community includes participants on a listserve dedicated to disability and foreign language study, which has a history that is somewhat symptomatic of its newness: when the listserve was launched, over eighty subscribers promptly signed on, yet discussion has been sporadic and tentative, and most days pass without any input from the members.[5] We know we need to talk about disability in our classrooms, and yet our conversations are stalled: *we don't know what to say, what to ask, or to whom to direct our questions.*

For many who are new to living with or talking about disability, the subject is often touchy. We may know not to use pathos-laden terms like "afflicted" or "stricken," but some expressions, such as "physically challenged," often strike people as transparent euphemism or trite political correctness. I suggest that naming and describing should be the least of our concerns. After all, labeling and classifying often justify exclusion even before inclusive, accessible strategies have been

tried. Waivers and course substitutions may suffice—legally—yet their use stems from a highly questionable premise. Granting a waiver or a substitution depends on predicting certain failure. The presumption is that students with disabilities cannot learn foreign languages. Many teachers and a small but growing number of researchers know that this is not true.

Students with disabilities of all kinds—learning disabilities, mobility impairments, sensory impairments, and so on—have the same capacity to learn foreign languages as their non-disabled peers when they are taught according to their abilities. In a soon-to-be-published paper, Helga Thorson and Rasma Lazda underscore that, while the diagnosis of a learning disability seems rather categorical, language learners exist on a continuum in which there is no clear distinction between those who "can" and those who "cannot" learn a foreign language.[6] Further, they cite evidence that in a highly structured classroom setting or in total immersion settings, students with learning disabilities often outpace students without them.

Disclosure of a disability: How do we enable students to identify their needs and learning styles?

Inclusive, accessible instruction takes planning, and the sooner a teacher or lab director can prepare, the better. This early knowledge usually depends upon a student's self-identification as a student with a disability, and at this point it is necessary to acknowledge that self-disclosure is fraught with complications. Stigma frequently accompanies disability, and students at times chose not to identify themselves as having a disability or requiring accommodation in order to learn. Students may also find themselves far from home, far from familiar support, and little prepared to articulate their needs or be their own advocates. Unfortunately, they may be better equipped to pass as a student without a disability so as to avoid unwanted attention, and in the process, jeopardize their chances for developing the skills that will enable their best achievements. Colleges and universities are not yet set up to anticipate, much less meet, a broad spectrum of learners. Thus, disabled college students not only find themselves having to navigate new territory without accustomed support, but they also encounter faculty and staff members woefully unaware that disabled students are in their classes. Thomas Wolanin and Patricia Steele note that "K-12 policies are based on a paternalistic model appropriate for minors, with strong parental involvement, but this model is not transferable to higher education" (viii). Jane Jarrow describes the basic legal premises for access to higher education, and it is worth citing her explanation in full here:

> Section 504 [of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973] defines person with a disability as anyone who has a substantial limitation in one or more of life's daily activities, including, but not limited to, walking, sleeping, eating, breathing, and learning. The fact that some disability populations are defined by law as part of

> the group of people with disabilities and thus entitled to nondiscrimination under the law does not necessarily mean that all individuals who have such limitations consider themselves to be disabled or choose to avail themselves of the support and services to which they are entitled by law. This right to choose is one of the most important tenets of Section 504: Students are not disabled unless they choose to consider themselves as such. Students have the right to accommodation, but they are also responsible for requesting such accommodation. The postsecondary institution is obligated to provide accommodation (that is, the appropriate support and services) only if the student requests them. Students with disabilities receive no special consideration or services until they ask for them. (8)

This is in some regards contentious territory and may be viewed by some as cultivating dependence by elevating the input of "professionals." Yet this is not substantially different from the many ways in which *all* students interact with their teachers and mentors. Students with disabilities are like students without disabilities: they are in the process of developing their strengths and working toward independence and autonomy. Like any other person, students with disabilities must seek out reliable information and advice and learn to make their own decisions. They rely on a circle of support which includes their most trusted family members and friends, their instructors, disability service providers, and others that might include doctors, therapists, social workers, or legal advocates. See yourselves as a vital link in that circle, but not at its center. That is of course where the student resides. The network of people begins with the user. As a vital link in the circle, contribute your knowledge and expertise or your ability to acquire knowledge and expertise.

The best way to foster growth and cultivate independence is to "meet students in the middle" by acknowledging to all students at the outset of each term that there is a range of learning styles. Encourage disclosure, not simply to comply with the law or to get around it, but to enable students to succeed in your course or use your lab successfully. Ask students to describe their educational experiences and abilities, forming questions that address a learner instead of questions that focus on strife. Expressly invite students to tell you how they learn best. Do not express indifference or assume that dealing with this student is not your job. Our role as teachers and lab administrators is to teach, to enable learning, to help all students develop their potential. In short, don't ask *whether* a student can learn, ask *how*.

Inclusion or accommodation? What is the difference?

The full inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education and society at large is a complex and ongoing challenge. Currently, teachers and administrators rely upon reasonable accommodation

as mandated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Accommodations are modifications to the format of course content or the setting in which students engage with the material. These might include course texts prepared in large print or in Braille, voice recognition software, or extra time to complete an exam. Rarely does a single accommodation answer every need, however, and accommodations are not required if they fundamentally alter the objectives of the exercise.

Teachers must take into account the many different degrees of impairment that emerge as disabling in varying circumstances. As language learners progress through the curriculum, their needs vary at each level. Consider, for example:

- A student who stutters in Japanese 101. How does she acquire good pronunciation skills?
- A student who is blind in German 204: How does he watch a German film?
- A student who is Deaf in French 426: How does she deliver an oral presentation and respond to questions?
- A student who uses a wheelchair who majors in Spanish: How does he plan for a semester in Costa Rica?

Answers to these questions may be found in specific accommodations for the individuals in question, but they also may be found in the very way in which courses are designed. A serendipitous effect of rethinking accessibility is that activities designed to accommodate a given disability will be generally enriching for students without disabilities. Every student benefits from teaching methods that acknowledge a wide range of learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. By engaging as many modalities as possible for presentation, recall, and evaluation, it is possible to enhance and transform pedagogy so that all students—including those with disabilities—can expand their capacity to learn.

Design instruction to be as inclusive as possible so that a variety of learners can quickly identify their entry into the activity. Approaches to the four challenges above may include a combination of accommodation and universal design. For example, choral repetition and recitation assist not only the student who stutters, but the others as well. Audio description of films and images allow not only the blind student to engage with the material, but also focuses the attention of students whose vision is stronger. Presentations by a student with hearing loss can be supported with visual aids or Powerpoint presentations, and questions can be posed in writing. Preparation for study abroad with a wheelchair can provide an eye-opening introduction to the target country for everyone about to travel there.

Students might write letters or make phone calls to inquire about ramps, elevators, sidewalks, classrooms, and bathrooms at the foreign university. They could examine photographs of the places they will visit to gauge accessibility, and they could research the laws pertaining to opportunities and integration of people with disabilities in that country. These brief examples should make clear that it is not necessary to establish exclusive programs for students with disabilities, but that they can they can learn alongside their non-disabled peers. Designing activities to include a broad range of learners need not curtail the quality of the lesson but can instead expand learning for all.

Computer technology, accommodation, and Universal Design

Computers facilitate many accommodations for students with sensory impairments or learning disabilities. Electronic texts are easy to enlarge, and voice synthesizing is done with an electronic text as the base. Several speech synthesizers and software programs will read and speak foreign languages on PCs. Closed-circuit television monitors enlarge printed texts. Kurzweil readers convert text to speech, and programs like Dragon Naturally Speaking convert speech into printed text. Such programs can often work in foreign languages as well as in English, but it takes time to become proficient in using them, and the work produced by them requires additional editing.

Foreign language classes use computers in many ways that may already encompass the principles of Universal Design. Computer Assisted Language Learning, or CALL has been underway for over thirty years and may have already enabled substantial access without anyone's explicit attention to it. A review of articles in the *CALICO Journal* from 1984 until 2000 reveals only one study that aims to draw from adaptive technology (TactilEar, a vibrotactile device worn on the wrist) in order to improve learning for foreign language students.

Computer Assisted Real Time Transcription, or CART, is a service designed for students with hearing impairments that has significant value for others as well. An interpreter transcribes a lecture or presentation and projects the text on a monitor for the student to read. One listserve participant described the benefits of CART this way: "A 'neat' thing about CART is that it fits with the principle of universal design of instruction. Everyone in the course benefited from CART. Especially in a heavily theoretical course, hearing students could consult the transcripts to see what they had missed or misunderstood. The professor used the transcripts to help him write articles" (subscriber to DS-HUM listserve; name withheld by the author).

Many other computer applications contribute to Universal Design. The Blackboard platform, for example, can create many types of activities that suit the learning styles of a wide range of students. One strategy is to use Blackboard for tests and quizzes to be taken

outside of class. The teacher may specify a one or two-day period for taking the test, but the student decides where and when, within that time frame, to do the work. This allows students flexibility, so that a disabled student who might ordinarily have to ask for an accommodation of extra time would then not need to do so. Used in this way, the Blackboard platform offer *all* students a flexible time frame, making it no longer necessary to distinguish between disabled and non-disabled students.

Media and digital technology can also allow students to explore disability as a topic within their target culture. Students might learn about foreign sign language, foreign Braille, and opportunities and rights of people with disabilities around the world. One potentially excellent resource is the Realia Project, found at http://www.realiaproject.org, a site that enables the viewing and sharing of photographs from countries around the world. This could be particularly useful for seeing the physical environments that students will encounter abroad. To date, the only image that is catalogued to pertain to disability per se is one of a self-cleaning unisex public toilet that is wheelchair accessible on street corner in Berlin. Let us ask for more images, share those photographs we take when abroad, and alert our colleagues to this very rich resource. This is a perfect instance where informed collaboration can expand the opportunities for disabled students while enriching the educational experience for others, as well.

The variety of disabilities and the politics of "special needs": How can we move from a two-sided debate to a multi-faceted discussion?

Feelings of resentment can ensue among people who are now legally compelled to enable access. According to a 2004 study on Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities, "faculty attitudes and the entrenched academic culture were cited as major barriers to implementing accommodations for students with disabilities in higher education. Faculty often are ignorant of their responsibilities and resent the perceived intrusion into their academic roles" (Wolanin and Steele viii).

There is indeed a politically charged chasm between "special help" and "regular teaching," yet I stubbornly refuse to accept the antagonistic terms of this debate. I view my work with students with disabilities as less an instance of catering to a political constituency than an opportunity to know my students. There are, after all, obvious parallels between, say, a blind student who needs a text in an alternate format and a sighted student who needs additional work with a particularly difficult concept or grammatical form. When students struggle with difficult material, teachers devise suitable materials. We do not wonder whether we are legally obliged to do so. Our own professional standards compel us to act.

The same ethical mandate should guide our work with students with

disabilities. The law is very clearly—and justifiably—on the side of meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities. Jarrow notes that "prior to Section 504, the provision of services and support for people with disabilities was largely the result of whim—pity, guilt, or obligation" (8). We may no longer regard accessibility as a privilege and not a right. The resources of money and time are rarely abundant, and will never be so long as accessible, adaptive, or assistive technology is regarded as a privilege or a gift. We must be the ones to argue that these resources are not just items on a "wish list," or for "special" cases alone, but absolutely necessary for the students who need them.

Heated debates usually center on two things, time and money. They usually arise when the interests of a few are perceived to be favored over the interests of the many. One of the main problems is inconsistency: policies vary from one institution to another and even from one office to another within institutions. Course accommodations and the rationale for granting them vary widely from one institution, or even one discipline, to the next. Reasonable accommodation thus becomes a haphazard and capriciously implemented concept, and teachers express frustration and even irritation at the prospect of the extra time and work that accommodation requires. What is needed is a shared sense of responsibility and commitment. We must feel called upon to set standards for designing accessible instructional technology and for ensuring an inclusive learning environment.

A second major problem is the lack of reliable information as to the costs of expanding access. True costs are very difficult to establish. Some argue that accommodations need not be expensive though they are incorrectly perceived to be costly. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that out of 367 federal contracts with 20,000 disabled workers, accommodation expenses can be broken down as follows:

> 51.1% cost nothing but management's time
>
> 18.5% cost less than $100
>
> 11.9% cost between $100 and $500
>
> 6.2% cost between $500 and $1000
>
> 4.0% cost between $1000 and $2000
>
> 8.0% cost more than $2000
>
> 69.6% of accommodations cost $100 or less.[7]

Others have worse news. Derek Toten writes that "I don't know about you, but we expend a tremendous amount of effort keeping our technology classrooms healthy and happy (...) Unless your administration's pockets are deep enough... (and I mean deep), it is

nearly impossible to maintain a staff to classroom ration that allows you to continue in the same "high-touch" service vein our users have come to expect and demand."[8]

Neither of these sources addresses assistive or adaptive technology per se. There is a need, then, for hard facts. Let us undertake comprehensive studies of the real costs and share reliable information about sources of funding[9].

We must continue to ask for and collect evidence of the pedagogical, educational value of accessible technology. We must of course inform ourselves about the laws that apply to our work and about the conditions that affect how students learn, but I do not recommend using legal arguments or succombing to divisive polemics. We are not lawyers or medical doctors, and should therefore not threaten to sue (or brace ourselves for lawsuits) or attempt to diagnose students. We should *teach* students and enable their learning of foreign languages. Our credibility and professionalism spring from our expertise. We must neither succumb to polemics nor confuse who we are in this endeavor. We elevate the teacher-learner relationship when we refuse to instrumentalize our students or ourselves in a political contest.

Building local and international communities: getting started

When people sit down together and look at their own institutions in detail, they will begin to discover (or uncover) ways in which they can use technology creatively to enhance instruction for all students, not just students with disabilities. Then share this information with colleagues elsewhere. One contributor to the DS-HUM listserve posted a request for more sharing of information: "It's important that we have discussions like this about what services and supports are offered by different universities. When we were fighting the CART battle here, it would have been extremely helpful to know that UVA has been offering CART for such a long time." Communicate your accomplishments, your needs, successes, and failures in an article or review.

While we know that disability affects 40 million Americans, which includes over 1 million college students, "disability" is not yet a widely-accepted organizing principle. Searching for published information may require words that have fallen out of favor today, such as "handicapped" or "infirm." Moreover, such searches are not yet likely to yield many reliable comprehensive studies on any of the critical questions about disability and higher education. If we want to make progress in expanding accessibility and ensuring that disabled students receive the same quality education as their non-disabled peers, it is time to take an inventory of our resources. Where do we stand? What do we have to do? What do we need to do our work well?

Let me suggest several areas for new knowledge and collaboration. Please publish your findings, present them at a conference, or con-

tact the DISFL listserv to share your knowledge or questions about:

- the real costs of adaptive or assistive technology at your institution
- the process of securing funding on your campus
- training tutors and lab assistants to work with students with disabilities AND training students with disabilities to work as tutors and lab assistants
- voice recognition software in languages other than English
- which web browsers are compatible with assistive or adaptive technology
- internet accessibility
- accessing foreign language web sites using text-based communications software
- compatibility of Kurzweil readers with e-mail or other programs
- screen magnification programs
- Braille output devices using languages other than English
- exchanges or studies abroad in which students or faculty with disabilities have participated

Enhancing access for students with disabilities works in concert with the goals of foreign language instruction by dispelling stereotypes and fostering meaningful cross-cultural communication. Collaboration among colleagues in foreign language departments, language labs, and disability student services is key. Only by continuing to ask for and share reliable information will we meet our material and programmatic needs and strengthen this most necessary community.

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Additional web resources of interest:

Excellent site from Great Britain with insights that can inform us in the United States: http://www.specialeducationalneeds.com/ "The World Wide Web contains plenty of information about modern foreign language learning and about special educational needs as separate issues. The implications of SEN ("special educational needs") for MFL ("modern foreign languages") attract relatively sparse attention, which is why the present website seeks to redress the deficit."-Webmaster David R. Wilson

Mobility International USA (http://www.miusa) has a searchable database of organizations that support international exchanges, but this is also useful for finding disability-related organizations or contacts for research unrelated to student exchanges. MIUSA exchanges are a great way for student researchers to learn about disability in different countries, since they have short accessible international exchanges for adults with disabilities, including students.

PEN-International (http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/) higher education professionals working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students around the world. Although the website is based at RIT, it is funded through companies in Japan.

The Instant Access Treasure Chest Foreign Language Teachers' Guide to Learning Disabilities is located at http://www.fln.vcu.edu/ld/ld.html. This is an extensive clearing house of web resources centered on learning disabilities. Caveat: many of the links are outdated. The site includes a section on blindness and low vision, with several terrific sites listed on this particular page: http://www.dpa.org.sg/VH/.

EASI: Equal Access to Software and Information (http://www.rit-edu/~easi/itd.htm)
EASI is the Premiere Provider of Online Training on Accessible Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities reaching more than 5,000 people in over 3 dozen countries since 1993.

Accessible Technologies for all Students (http://www.accessi-bletech4all.org)

Center for Applied Special Technology (http://www.cast.org)

Assistive Technology Resource links from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock: http://www.ualr.edu/pace/. The University has made a principled and comprehensive commitment to educating students with disabilities. Their site is an excellent model and a rich source of information that can inform educators at other institutions.

Notes

[1]This meeting, "Perspectives on Language Instruction for All: From Adaptive Technology to Universal Design," was held at Northeastern University. Conference organizer Debra Mandel brought together an outstanding array of speakers who addressed the many intersections among disability and foreign language learning. Topics included learning disabilities and text-to-speech software, a blind professor's personal journey with assistive technology, American Sign Language, and technologies enabling computer use with control of only eye or head movements.

[2]A fuller discussion of the complexity of self-disclosure follows later in this essay.

[3]Syracuse: The Graduate School at Syracuse U, 2005.

[4]Forthcoming from Yale University Press, 2007.

[5]The new listserve's address is DISFL@lists.umn.edu. It was established to create a space for those people specifically interested in the intersection between disability and foreign languages and cultures. Another well-established listserve devoted to disability in the humanities at large is DS-HUM@UMD.EDU.

[6]Thorson, Helga, and Rasma Lazda. "Initiatives to Educate Foreign Language Faculty on Teaching Students with Disabilities." To appear in *Worlds Apart: Disability and Foreign Language Learning.* Eds. Tammy Berberi, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Ian Sutherland. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007.

[7]Cited at http://www.rit.edu/~easi/pubs/heath.htm.

[8]Toten, Derek W. 2005. "From the President." Leader Published by the Consortium of College and University Media Centers.: http://www.ccumc.org/pubs/Leader/LeaderV33N2.pdf.

[9]Major funding sources outside of individual institutions include state Departments of Education and state Tech Act agencies, who oversee the Assistive Technology Act and the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act. Known by its short form, the Tech Act provides federal funds to assist states in developing easily available, consumer-responsive access to assistive technology, technology services, and information. According to the Tech Act, "assistive technology" is any tool or item that increases, maintains, or improves functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" (ATA 97). Each Tech Act agency provides information about funding, training, and outreach. See http://www.ataporg.org/ Although it was reauthorized in 2004, it is currently facing severe cutbacks.