

8 ENABLING THE READER

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OVERVIEW

Students in writing courses often circulate inaccessible and hard-to-read digital documents to their teachers and peers, thus disabling the readers.¹ This essay is inspired by my experience with my students and the activities I design to help them notice the importance of composing readable and accessible digital texts. The essay draws on feminist and critical disability studies that perceive environments and social norms as disabling rather than the body as disabled from within. Therefore, the essay holds the author accountable for designing texts that enable the reader. The essay focuses on the context of student authors and their readers within the class community. The focus serves as a starting point to taking what students learn in class to their targeted audiences in the world. The essay brings examples of digital texts that disable the reader and works some out to show examples that enable the readers. The essay also includes exercises for individual homework and in-class group activities.

INTRODUCTION

In many rhetorical histories and traditions, rhetoric and composition serve as tools to enact active citizenship and civic engagement. That means a rhetor, speaker, or writer can utilize rhetoric and composition to act as a good citizen and contribute to positive change in the world. As educated citizens and students of rhetoric and writing, you have the responsibility and capacity to contribute to making the world around you a better place to live. However, I wish to warn you that writing and rhetoric

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could also be tools to contribute to an adverse change in the world. For instance, intentionally or unintentionally writing to a targeted audience can disable them.

Have you ever thought that when you write for targeted readers, you might be disabling them? Perhaps the question makes you uncomfortable as it implies violence committed against the readers. But what does it mean to disable the reader?

Unlike what some might think, I am not implying breaking the reader's arm or leg and leaving them¹ with a disability. Rather, I am talking about writing practices that might disable the reader's access to the author's texts. By access, I mean what the accessibility and usability scholar, Janice Redish, describes as enabling the reader to: "Find what they need," "Understand what they find," and "Use what they understand appropriately" (163). According to Redish then, accessibility includes three levels of:

1. reading the text,
2. comprehending it, and
3. using it to serve the reader's purposes.

Any author can enable or disable the reader's access to their text on these three levels.

To better explain what it means to disable the reader, let me back up a little bit and start with a theory about disability. According to Rosemarie Garland-Thomson who is a feminist disability studies scholar: "disability . . . is not a natural state or corporeal inferiority, inadequacy, excess, or a stroke of misfortune... The ability/disability system produces subjects by differentiating and marking bodies" (5). I understand from Rosemarie Garland-Thomson that disability is not something that happens in the body from within but rather something that is done to it. Disability does not reside in any given human body but is created by the surrounding cultural environment of that body. The theory that Garland-Thomson offers flips the equation. Someone doesn't have a less than ordinary capability in their bodies. Instead, the cultural environments discriminate against someone by limiting their access to and mobility within their environments. The result is privileging particular bodies by marking them as adequate and normal while marking other bodies as inadequate and abnormal.

Of course, environments do not act on their own. Humans contribute to constructing and impacting these environments. Take, for instance, engineers who alter environments following intentional plans. Imagine that engineers in your school designed high steps and long stairs at the entrances of the school buildings. When they do so, engineers decide that only

particular bodies would enter the building. The engineers' architecture design excludes a student with a broken leg, a staff member with arthritis in their knees, a toddler visitor with their parent, and a faculty member in a wheelchair. The student, staff member, toddler, and faculty member might be able to make it and enter the building but with much struggle or with the help of others around them. If instead, engineers included a ramp option for entering the school buildings, all the listed above would be able to enter the buildings more easily.

Looking at the situation that way makes disability not something natural within any given body of the student, staff member, toddler, or faculty member but a result of engineers' design decisions. When designing steps rather than a ramp to enter the buildings, engineers exclude particular bodies from entering the buildings and restrain particular bodies' mobility. That exclusion is unjust and discriminative because it privileges certain bodies over others and overlooks the needs of the buildings' visitors. Thus, it disables them.

If you agree with Garland-Thomson on what she forwards as a feminist disability theory, perhaps you still wonder, "how does that theory relate to writing and the writer and disabling the reader?" The answer that I have for you is that, like the engineers who design and construct buildings, writers, including you and I, design and construct digital texts that can disable or enable the readers. Whether through the design or content, we as writers can make our texts difficult to access, read, comprehend, and use appropriately. Such a case compromises our mission as educated citizens and students of rhetoric and composition to make the world a better place for living.

In her article, "What Does It Mean to Move," Christina V. Cedillo, a disability studies scholar, calls for teachers to "contest conditions that create exclusion" by teaching students in ways "that recognize and foreground bodily diversity so that students learn to compose for accessibility and inclusivity" (par. 2). This essay responds to Cedillo's call by inviting you to internalize inclusive practices in your document design and composition. In this essay, I provide several examples of how writers might enable or disable the reader by designing and constructing their digital texts. You might relate to at least some of the situations I present here. However, these examples don't account for all possibilities of disabling/enabling the readers. As ethical writers and designers, we always need to facilitate access to and readability of our texts. Thus, we always need to think of our diverse readers and targeted audiences' needs and not assume that everyone is just like us, able to access what is accessible to us.

CENTERING THE READER

In any case, educated digital authors need to account for the rhetorical situation within which they compose their texts. A rhetorical situation includes the message, targeted audience, and medium of the message. The medium always imposes particular capabilities and constraints.

Perhaps you have been advised before to organize and format your text well so that you'd appear credible in the eyes of the reader. A principle that seems valid, we all should care about the image that we project about ourselves through our texts' content and design. For instance, you are likely to want a resume to look professional and respond to the job advertisement requirements that you're applying for. Also, you probably want your research paper to be supported by credible resources and evidence beyond your own opinion and formatted consistently according to a particular formatting or citation style. But you need to remember that how the reader perceives the author's image is highly related to how accessible the author's text is. If the text is not accessible to the reader, it doesn't matter how professional it looks or how it is supported by credible evidence. That's simply because the reader can't access it, to begin with. What's the point of a document that the targeted audience cannot read!

To think of examples of how documents might disable the reader, let's look at readability and accessibility from the reader's point of view on the three levels of reading the text, understanding it, and using it appropriately for the reader's purposes. These three levels of readability and accessibility overlap; the following examples will show you how. In what follows, I provide examples of textual content and design that could disable or enable the readers on the readability and accessibility three levels. These examples are inspired by my experience reading hundreds of texts from students each semester.

ENABLING THE READER TO READ THE TEXT

As Redish indicates, for the text to be accessible, readers should be able to read the text, which is the first level that an author needs to grant to their readers. What follows are two examples that show how the author could enable or disable the readability of their texts.

ENABLING THE READER BY FONT TYPE AND SIZE

It might be obvious that some font types and sizes could hinder readability and accessibility to the reader. A font that is too small or too decorative will

likely make readability harder for the targeted audience. Take, for example, the following textual examples (table 1, which contains figures 1-6). Which text in each row is easier to read?

Table 1

Examples that Demonstrate how Font Type and Size Contribute to Enhancing or Hindering the Readability and Accessibility of Texts from my own Perspective as a Reader. The first column shows the number of each example. The second column shows font types and sizes that make it difficult for me to read and understand the text. The third column shows font types and sizes that enhance the readability of texts to me.

Ex. #	Textual Option #1	Textual Option # 2
1	<i>What do you think?</i> Figure 1: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Brush Script Std size 14	What do you think? Figure 2: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Times New Roman size 14
2	What do you think? Figure 3: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Times New Roman size 10	What do you think? Figure 4: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Times New Roman size 14
3	What do you think? Figure 5: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Baguet Script size 12	What do you think? Figure 6: The question “What do you think?” written in font type Comic Sans MS size 12

Notice that the examples in table 1 are given from my own perspective as a reader with particular capabilities. The font type and size might enable or disable me, but I don’t represent all variations of readers. For instance, readers with Dyslexia find it hard to distinguish letters and words from each other in written texts, which impacts the time required for reading and comprehending written words (Rello and Baeza-Yates). According to Rello and Baeza-Yates, font types in written texts are critical for readers with Dyslexia. See figure 7 for reading comprehension time required by readers with Dyslexia for 12 font types.

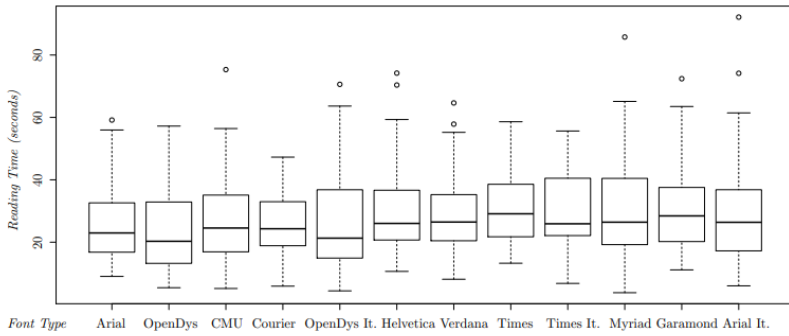


Figure 7. A figure created by Rello and Baeza-Yates shows how 12 font types impact the time required for reading and comprehending texts by readers with Dyslexia. The X axis shows the font types of Arial, OpenDys, CMU, Courier, OpenDys It., Helvetica, Verdana, Times, Times It., Myriad, Garamond, and Arial It, arranged by the readability time, where Arial has the shortest readability time and Arial It. Has the longest readability time. The Y axis shows the time in seconds required to read each font including the median, mean, and standard deviation of the readability time. Thus, the font types with the least time needed for reading, point to better readability. See “Good Fonts for Dyslexia” for more comprehensive study results. (The figure was reproduced for this chapter with the permission of the authors.)

Figure 7 shows the time required to read 12 different fonts by readers diagnosed with Dyslexia. As Rello and Baeza-Yates’ study shows, font types such as Arial, OpenDys, and CMU are more readable to readers with Dyslexia than font types of Myriad, Garamond, and Arial Italic, for instance. For us as good authors and citizens, such results mean that we need to consider readers with Dyslexia when composing any text. If we focus on what looks “professional” or “nice” to us, we risk disabling particular readers, such as ones with Dyslexia, from reading and comprehending our texts.

Exercise 1: Conduct research about font types and sizes that facilitate readability to readers with different conditions and capabilities. What would be the implications of your findings on your choice of font size and type selection as a writer?

ENABLING THE READER BY EMAIL SUBJECT LINES

Like font type and size, subject lines play a role in facilitating the process of reading the email text to grant the reader the first level of accessibility,

as indicated by Redish. The purpose of a subject line for an email is to give the reader an idea about the content of the email. Considering that emails often require a response from the reader, a subject line could facilitate or hinder the author's access to a particular email when one has tenths of emails to respond to.

If you ever received an email with no subject line or with a generic subject line such as "Hi," you probably noticed how the lack of a subject line disables you from knowing what the email is about until you open and read it. Your lack of knowledge of the subject might influence whether you open the email, read it, and respond to it in a timely manner. For example, which email from your roommate are you more likely to open right away? An email with the subject line "Hey," or "Our apartment is on fire?" Although not often email subjects would be that tragic, you get the point. A meaningful subject line is essential to motivate the reader to open an email and read it, which constitutes the first level of readability and accessibility.

Let's now imagine that for some reason, in the future you needed to find a particular email in your mailbox. How would you search for it without having a meaningful subject line? You might, of course, find the email by searching for the person who sent it. However, if you forget who sent that particular email or when, or if you received many emails from the same person, what would you do? A teacher who has many students might forget who sent a particular email. Without a meaningful subject line, it might be near impossible to search for and find such an email a few days after it was received by the teacher. Consider also readers who use screen reader software. It would confuse them when the software keeps reading the phrase "no subject line, no subject line" repeatedly. Thus, using a generic subject line or not including a subject line is like not providing a suitable ramp to a building. In that case, both the author and engineer prevent their targeted users from accessing their products easily and equitably.

ENABLING THE READER TO COMPREHEND A TEXT

The second level of readability and accessibility per Redish's definition is comprehending a text, which includes getting the idea of the text and being able to remember it. In what follows, I include an example of how an author could disable or enable the reader to comprehend a text.

DISABLING THE READERS BY LONG PARAGRAPH BLOCKS

Have you ever noticed that textbook texts can be organized under headers, sub-headers, short paragraphs, and lists, making it easier for you to comprehend them? Contrary to that, a text presented as a whole block of many ideas mixing together, making it hard to comprehend and remember. Take, for example, the following writing assignment that I composed for my students:

AN ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

Whether in an educational, social, or work context, authors often need feedback from their peers, teachers, family members, or supervisors to enhance their texts. A genre through which the author could ask for feedback is an author's memo. When explaining the rhetorical situation of a text to the reviewers and indicating the aspects of feedback needed, an author enables the reviewers to comprehend the text and respond to it by providing helpful feedback. To help the reviewers (peers and teachers) to provide you with specific and helpful feedback for your revision, you need to compose an author's memo as follows: Provide the rhetorical situation of your essay (exigency, readers, purpose) to help the reader, understand where you're headed with your essay (5 points). Provide details of the revisions that you implemented so far on the latest draft of the essay (5 points). Provide details about the revisions you intend to do in the future. Provide a prioritized list concerning the feedback you wish to receive from your readers (5 points). Read your classmates' memos and comment and respond to 2 of them using tactful rhetoric by the end of the day of 1/23/2020 (2.5 points for each response, 5 points total). Use a template of a memo—as we learned earlier in the semester—that facilitates readability and accessibility. Use a black font color of size 14 (2 points). Use a font type that facilitates readability (2 points). Make sure to have page numbers at the top or the bottom of the page (2 points). Use headers and sub-headers as designated in MS Word (2 points). Run the accessibility checker feature of MS Word on the memo, and fix anything that's not accessible according to the accessibility checker. Save the memo as a pdf file named "First & Last Name-Personal Author's Memo" and submit it here. (2 points).

THE REVISED ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

Now, notice how I revised the design of the assignment text with readability and accessibility in mind. Which do you find easier to comprehend and remember? Is it the original assignment or the revised one?

Introduction

Whether in an educational, social, or work context, authors often need feedback from their peers, teachers, family members, or supervisors to enhance their texts. A genre through which the author could ask for feedback is an author's memo. When explaining the rhetorical situation of a text to the reviewers and indicating the aspects of feedback needed, an author enables the reviewers to comprehend the text and respond to it by providing helpful feedback.

Content Requirements (60-90 minutes)

To help the reviewers (peers and teachers) to provide you with specific and helpful feedback for your revision, you need to compose an author's memo as follows:

1. Provide the rhetorical situation of your essay (exigency, readers, purpose) to help the reader understand where you're headed with your essay. **(5 points)**
2. Provide details of the revisions you implemented so far on the latest draft of the essay. **(5 points)**
3. Provide details about the revisions that you intend to do in the future. Provide a prioritized list concerning the feedback you wish to receive from your readers. **(5 points)**
4. Read your classmates' memos and comment and respond to 2 of them using tactful rhetoric by the end of the day of 1/23/2020. **(2.5 points for each response, 5 points total)**

Readability and Accessibility Requirements (14 points)

Use a template of a memo—as we learned earlier in the semester—that facilitates readability and accessibility.

1. Use a black font color of size 14. **(2 points)**
2. Use a font type that facilitates readability **(2 points)**
3. Make sure to have page numbers at the top or the bottom of the page. **(2 points)**
4. Use headers and sub-headers as designated in MS Word. **(2 points)**

5. Run the accessibility checker feature of MS Word on the memo, and fix anything that's not accessible according to the accessibility checker.
6. Save the memo as a pdf file named "First & Last Name-Personal Author's Memo" and submit it here. **(2 points)**

Do you notice how I revised the text so that it is divided into sections under headers, sub headers, and lists? Do you recognize how I used bold font type to purposefully emphasize particular parts of the text? Although it is initially important that student readers read the assignment word for word, the new revision makes it easier for them to comprehend the text, remember it, and relocate a particular part that they might need at a certain moment.

Exercise 2: Go back to a past text that you composed and revise it into sections using headers, sub-headers, and lists as designated on MS Word. If you don't know how to use headers, sub-headers, and lists in MS Word, consult search engines and YouTube to find many tutorials about that.

ENABLING THE READER TO USE THE TEXT APPROPRIATELY

Using a text purposefully and appropriately comprises the third level of accessibility as indicated by Redish. One of the genres that require action from the readers is what's called a memo. You're likely to use this genre extensively in the workplace. As a starting point to learn about writing accessible memos, I introduce you in the next section to the author's memo, a genre writers use extensively.

ENABLING THE READER BY ACCESSIBLE AUTHOR'S MEMO

When an author writes for a particular reader, the author usually has a purpose to accomplish. Likewise, the reader will likely have their own purpose in reading a particular text. In the previous assignment example, the author is supposed to compose a memo to acquire feedback from the reviewer. If the author provided their texts to the reader/reviewer without any explanation about the rhetorical context of the text and the particular feedback needed, the reviewer might provide feedback that doesn't respond to the author's needs. Without enough guidance, when a reviewer is asked to provide feedback, they are likely to look for places in the text that need

revision. Because the author and readers' purposes might contradict, it is important for the author to make themselves clear about the feedback that they wish to receive from the reviewer.

Let's see how an author, Priya Samoni² responded to the requirement of an author's memo that she submitted with her essay's draft.

PERSONAL ESSAY DRAFT #2: STUDYING IN A FOREIGN LAND | AUTHOR'S MEMO

Notice how the student author provided a full comprehensive title of the memo that included the assignment type, draft #, and title of the essay.

To: Reviewers (Nina, Tory, and Dr. Diab)

From: Priya Samoni

The genre of a memo requires a clear designation of both the writer and readers.

Dear Nina, Tory, and Dr. Diab,

I'd appreciate your feedback on my essay draft#2. In this memo, I explain the rhetorical situation of my essay so far, the revisions I've implemented on the previous draft, and the feedback I wish to receive from you at this point.

This tactful introduction helps the readers know what to expect in the rest of the memo and how the memo will be organized. Thus, the author helps the reviewers read and comprehend the essay, which comprises the first and second level of accessibility as indicated by Redish.

Rhetorical Situation (Exigence, Targeted Audience, and Purpose) of the Essay

Knowing where the author is aiming with their essay helps the reviewers use the text appropriately to provide feedback that would help the reader to achieve their goal.

The issue that I attempt to respond to is the struggle I went through as an international student and non-native English speaker pursuing my bachelor's degree in psychology in the US.

As readers of this essay, I target students and teachers in undergraduate education in the US who might unintentionally contribute to the struggle of international students in the US.

I hope that after reading my essay, the targeted audience would think of their own actions or lack of action that might contribute to foreign students' struggles and amend their behaviors toward foreign students accordingly to help foreign students succeed.

Implemented Revisions

After I received feedback from my peers on the first draft, I cut parts from the essay that made it unfocused, such as the part about my travel from my country to the U.S., and the extended details about my high school in my own country. The cut parts happened in paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 7 in draft #1.

Responding to the feedback that I received, I elaborated on my struggle understanding basic aspects in the process of registering for my classes and communicating with my mentors. These details set the stage for the idea that even the smallest things contribute to international students' stressful education experiences. You can see these revisions highlighted in blue color in paragraphs 2, 3, 4.

On my own, I read the essay out loudly, shortened many sentences, and made revisions on word level in some places. I highlighted these in light blue.

The author divided the parts of the rhetorical situation (exigency, readers, and purpose) into three separate paragraphs which helps the reader locate each easily, thus read, comprehend, and use the text appropriately.

Another thing that the author could have done is including these in a bulleted point list or under subheadings.

The author indicates what they done specifically, which helps the reviewers locate the differences between draft #1 and draft#2.

They also explain why they've done their revisions, which helps the reviewers provide feedback that takes in consideration the author's purpose.

By explaining where the revisions happened, the author helps the reviewers locate the revised parts.

Specific Revisions to Implement in the Future

I already spent 6 hours revising draft#1 into draft#2. However, I still feel that my story doesn't flow well as I feel I jump from one topic to another in some places without having enough transition. See, for instance, the topic that ends in paragraph 5 and the one which starts in paragraph 6. I plan to think of ways to reorganize my essay's parts to flow more cohesively.

Often authors know what needs to be revised but because of time constraint they can't do all the desired revisions at once. By acknowledging what the author already is aware of, the reviewers can focus on giving feedback about something else that the author needs help with. In that case, the author's text enables the reviewers to use the text appropriately.

Prioritized Feedback

What I would appreciate your help with at this time are:

The author specifically helps the reviewers understand what the author needs help with.

1. How to make better connections between the various incidents that I show in my essay so that they don't sound like a list of incidents but rather a cohesive essay.
2. I am struggling with the conclusion and am not sure what to do there. It seems to me that repeating the main points in my essay might be boring. How could I highlight the main purpose of my essay without saying, "this is the purpose of my essay"?
3. Any other suggestions you might have would be great because I am sure I couldn't capture all the weaknesses in my essay.

The author allows the reviewers to provide feedback from their perspective and in that way the author would receive a comprehensive feedback that covers both the author and reviewers' purposes.

Thank you in advance for your help. I am looking forward to receiving and discussing your feedback next week.

Do you notice how the memo text and design help the reviewers read and comprehend the memo? Do you notice how the memo's specificity helps the readers read and understand the essay and helps them provide meaningful feedback to the author? Notice how the student in this example responded to the teacher's expectations. The student used a readable and accessible template and responded to the memo assignment requirements by sorting out the contents under subheadings and list, when necessary, for instance.

Exercise 3: If you composed any author's memos in the past, check out at least one of them. Does it comply with the readability and accessibility guidelines that are indicated in this article? If not, what could you do to enhance the readability and accessibility of your memo? If you have never submitted an author's memo with a draft before, try to do so next time you submit a draft, and ask the reviewers whether the memo helped them provide you with meaningful feedback.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKERS

The previous examples of enabling and disabling texts aim to give you a place to start from. Once you compose a text, it is a good idea to check it against the readability and accessibility guidelines provided in some software. For instance, Moodle, Canvas, M.S. Word, and Acrobat Reader software all have built-in accessibility checkers that give you details about what needs to be enhanced to make your texts more accessible. However, you should be careful not to fully rely on these checkers as they can miss some necessary aspects of readability and accessibility.

Exercise 4: Search the internet for tutorials about accessibility checkers in M.S. Word and Acrobat Reader. Follow the instructions in the tutorials to check the readability and accessibility of M.S. Word or PDF documents on your computer. Follow the instructions to enhance the readability and accessibility of the checked text(s). Share what you learn from the process with your teacher and classmates.

LANGUAGE TRANSPARENCY AND READABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY AS WORK IN PROGRESS

Both engineers and writers are makers who could contribute to constructing enabling and disabling environments for their targeted audiences.

While engineers could enable or disable users by the way how they design buildings and products, writers can enable or disable their targeted audiences by the way how they compose their texts. The examples I provided in this book chapter offer a few strategies to enhance the readability and accessibility of authors' texts so that you act as a writer who is aware of their capability to enable and disable the reader. However, although these strategies might help make texts clearer and easier for readers to read and comprehend, they don't guarantee that the readers would understand from the text what the author intended. That's because of two reasons. First, language is not transparent, so different readers might interpret and comprehend texts differently. The second reason is that we, as authors, can never account for all the situations that might make our texts readable and accessible for particular readers. Therefore, one strategy we can continue to pursue is to communicate with our readers as much as possible and ask for their feedback about the readability and accessibility of our texts. In a classroom context, you could always ask your peers and teachers whether it was easy for them to read your text, comprehend it, and use it for their own purposes productively. You could also ask them to tell you what they understood from your text and compare it with what you intended. Depending on the answers, you can revise your texts and document design accordingly.

The examples and activities provided in this book chapter about readability and accessibility can't exhaust all possibilities for creating accessible and readable texts. The technologies of composition change every day. Therefore, the technology examples that might be helpful to you in this chapter this year 2023 might become irrelevant in 2024 or after. What remains, however, is the principle of being aware of your capability of disabling the reader and the need for lots of thinking, research, laboring, and revision to guarantee that you won't oppress the reader or deny them the chance of accessing and comprehending your texts. As Jay Dolmage—a disability studies scholar—warns us: when we think of accessibility as checklists, we risk believing that accessibility is fully achieved “if the boxes were all checked.” Instead, Dolmage argues, we need to work with any list as a place “to *start* thinking, doing, acting, and moving” (par. 2). I, therefore, invite you to work with this chapter as a starting step in an ongoing process toward maintaining readability and accessibility in texts that you produce.

NOTES

1. I use the pronouns “them”, “they”, and “theirs” intentionally when speaking of individual humans to disrupt the gender binary and account for humans who don’t abide by that binary in defining themselves.

2. I made up the example and student’s name to show an example of an author’s memo that facilitates the readers’ access to both the memo and essay draft.

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TEACHER RESOURCES FOR “ENABLING THE READER”

OVERVIEW AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

This chapter draws on feminist disability studies that perceive disability as a defect in the surrounding environment of disabled bodies rather than the bodies themselves. Within that framework, student authors are invited to recognize themselves as contributors to environments that could disable the readers at times. This chapter can be used as a foundation to maintain readability and accessibility in students’ produced documents as social justice action throughout the semester. Thus, it might be more beneficial to introduce readability and accessibility and assign the chapter to students at the very beginning of the semester. The chapter can be assigned for reading as a whole or in parts, depending on the teacher’s agenda and course scope. Exercises and discussion questions are embedded inside the text for accessibility reasons.

The chapter draws on the information design theory forwarded by Janice Redish, “What Is Information Design?”, to identify three levels of readability and accessibility of texts. The three levels are:

- Reading the text
- Comprehending it
- Using it appropriately

Thus, the examples in the chapter reiterate the three levels of readability and accessibility to help students internalize Redish’s definition of readability and accessibility.

ACTIVITIES

Purposefully, exercises were suggested to students in-text to relate to a particular example of text that disables/enables the reader. These exercises can be assigned to students as homework that they do individually or as group work to do in class. In what follows, I provide five more activities that aim to engage students in research around readability and accessibility in and outside the classroom. You might introduce these activities as actions that respond to Jay Dolmage’s invitation for an ongoing performance of action toward composing readable and accessible texts.

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING EMAILS' READABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

This activity starts and ends in the classroom, but the research component occurs outside the classroom.

1. Introduce the activity to students indicating that each needs to interview someone who has a profession that requires extensive email communication. Each student needs to ask their interviewee about practices they perceive in the email communication that makes it hard for them to read, understand, and/or respond to emails.
2. Ask students to compose the interview questions together, first in small groups, and after that as a whole class. Prompt students to use the examples in this book chapter to inspire their questions and make sure they bring questions about new aspects of readability and accessibility that the book chapter didn't include.
3. After students conduct their interviews, let them share their findings in class. Help students arrange their findings in categories of readability and accessibility and draw conclusions accordingly.
4. Ask students how their research findings might influence their future composition of emails.

PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

This activity aims to analyze professional documents with an eye on readability and accessibility.

1. Depending on the focus of your course, provide students with professional documents (brochures, flyers, resumes, instructions, etc.) to analyze in groups in class.
2. Ask students to create two lists: one about what was done well to facilitate the document readability and accessibility, and one about what violated readability and accessibility guidelines.
3. Ask the groups to share their findings with the whole class. Help students create class guidelines for readability and accessibility that they'd commit to in their document design.

CONDUCTING INTERNET RESEARCH ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY CHECKERS

This activity introduces students to accessibility checkers that are embedded in various software such as MS Word, Acrobat Reader, and Learning Management Systems.

- Ask students to search the internet for tutorials about accessibility checkers in M.S. Word, Acrobat Reader, and the Learning Management System that they use in your school.
- Require students to follow the instructions in the tutorials to check the readability and accessibility of M.S. Word or PDF documents on their computers.
- Ask students to follow the instructions to enhance the readability and accessibility of the checked text(s).
- Ask students to share what they learn from the process with their class community.

FONT TYPES, COLORS, AND SIZES AS RHETORICAL CHOICES

1. Ask students to conduct research about font types, colors, and sizes that facilitate readability to readers with different conditions and capabilities, such as Dyslexia and color-blind readers.
2. Encourage students to think of the implications of their findings on their rhetorical choices of font size, type, and color as writers.

NAMING FILES MEANINGFULLY

1. Introduce file names as a pointer to file contents that function similarly to email subject lines and document titles.
2. Ask students to go back to the last three assignment files submitted to their teacher and/or peers through the learning management system they use.
3. Ask students to pay attention to how they named their files.
4. Ask students to reflect on whether they made it easy for their teacher and/or peers to know who submitted what by reading the file names.
5. Ask students to revise the file names, when necessary, to point out the author and what they submitted to the reader.