ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND

EDUCATION OF THE DEAF SYMPOSIUM

"ONLINE DESIGN: ACCESS FOR DEAF STUDENTS"

PRESENTER: {PRESENTER NAME}

NTID/RIT

[WEDNESDAY|THURSDAY|FRIDAY], JUNE [25|26|27], 2003

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A.M.

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Patricia De Caro. "online design: Access for deaf

students".

>> REGINA: Good morning, everyone. I just passed out an

evaluation form, and if you could please fill that out after

the session and then give it to me. I'll be standing at the

back of the room near the door. This session is number 311 D.

>> DR. De CARO: Am ion? Okay. Good. I just want to let

you know I work at the Rochester Technical Institute. I am

really not good at technology. I am not sure why I work here.

I just thought I'd let you know that. That's why they're being

very helpful and careful with me, okay? My name is pat.

Mudgett-DeCaro. I worked here at NTID for, I don't know, since

1970. And I will not -- I gave you the hand {KPWROUT}s, but

I'm not going to -- handouts, but I'm not going to follow it.

I'm going to skip over a lot. So I will try to tell you

where

I am if you're looking at it, otherwise, don't. Now, I'd like

to ask from this point on, I'd like to ask if you would

interpret for me, but I want to first thank you very much for

doing that and to remind you that Leslie is here as an

interpreter for all of us to facilitate our communication.

Okay? Thanks. Stop, okay. Let me just ask you to give me

some brief idea of what you think of when you think of access

for deaf students. Any ideas?

>> Communication? Equal communication.

>> DR. De CARO: More? Other?

>> Opportunities.

>> Equal access.

>> DR. De CARO: At this conference, you will see a lot of

high tech kind of access. A lot of people here know a lot more

about high tech than I do. I'm working on it. But in your

situations, you may have teachers who are not very good at

technology or for whom it's a very slow process. Or you may

have difficulties in getting this high tech equipment. So you

may want it, but you can't get it. You may understand it, but

you can't get it. I am still using a mostly text-based,

written form of online education. That can pose some serious

disadvantages for some of my students. For whom the written

form of the language is not easy. So for me, I had to look at

what I can do at this point in time and think: Even though

this is text-based mostly, how can I make it the most possible

accessible to my students, deaf and hearing? Access is not

only through technology. In my case, I look at it from the

standpoint of curriculum design. , as well. I also think of

access as another aspect of access being if I were a deaf

student sitting in the classroom, would I be able to not only

access the information communication wise, but also would I

have some link to my own experience. My experience of being

deaf in a hearing world. So that's another aspect. One of

the

things I try to do, and this is what I will show you, is to use

a wide variety of approaches in the online course. I made

videotapes and sent them to the students. I tried to establish

a very informal tone where no one feels uncomfortable writing

to me about anything. I don't care how good their English is.

I don't care. I want communication. I'm online every single

day. To make sure that if there's something there, I respond

very quickly. I set up teams of students to help each other,

deaf and hearing. They have a handson product that they're

creating and in the end is ready to go. Ready to use. I ask

them to have discussions with me in journals. And they have

discussions with each other. This is all based -- there are

also lots of readings that they have. But this is in addition

to the usual lecture/reading discussion format. Now I'm going

to skip to slide number 7, if I can find it. It's on Page 3.

Slide number 7. You'll see it in the right-hand corner. On

your handout if you wanted to look at the paper. For this

class, it's a master's program class. I see I left out a word.

So my English is not so great, either. I have both deaf and

hearing students. It's a master's level program. I'm skipping

two, to "approaches." I teach two different sections. One

section is here, classroom. The students come once a week. We

meet in person, face-to-face. The rest of it is online.

Another one is completely long distance. Distance learning.

One in Puerto Rico, one in Kentucky, one in Albany. Which do I

prefer? I prefer the class here, the face-to-face. That's my

preference. But there are many people out there who can't

come. They can't do that. They're full-time teachers or

they're far away someplace. They can't do it. But through the

distance learning course, they can get it. Not what I consider

the best, maybe, but good. The next we'll show you the

desktop

appearance of the course. Can you see? Yes. The little flags

mean there's something there that I haven't read yet. There's

one for information. There's a survey. I ask them to tell me

about their experience with deaf education or just deaf people

in general, if they're not deaf themselves. Their experience

with peoples of other cultures. And their experience with

computers. There are a lot of teachers out there like me.

There's a whole lot of them out there who aren't any more

comfortable with technology than I am. I like to know that

ahead of time. Where are we? And if you don't like

technology, why are you taking this course? Introductions.

I'll show you examples of these. Biographyes of the people who

are on the videotapes. Examples of the unit plan product that

they will produce. I post a lecture at the beginning of each

topic. We have discussion boards for every topic.

Homework is

up there. Send the homework back to me into the drop box.

PowerPoint presentations send to me. It's really important in

a distance situation to set up what I call a "coffee pot."

You want to talk about recipes? Talk about it there. You want

to tell me about your dog? Or each other? Fine. Put it

there. Get to know each other. Education in the news daily.

What's happening? Teaching process. Sometimes students have

said to me, "I don't like the way you're teaching this course

right now or this thing or whatever." fine, let's talk about

it. Let's all talk about it. What's a better way to teach

this thing? You're all eacher teachers or future teachers.

How do we improve?

The first one of the -- of what's not there anymore -- are

the introductions, I mean, the information. Wait, all right,

the introduction. All the way through I use examples all the

time. So the example of my introduction. Now, please

send

your own introductions with a digital picture, if you can. You

may not have the equipment, that's fine. Don't do it. If you

have the equipment, please. I already talked about the coffee

pot. This is the information area. Syllabus, guidelines,

exactly what do I want you to do? And how will it be graded?

For example, this is the first part of it, and it's quite

boring, but the format and organization. They know from the

beginning what I'm going -- from the guidelines and also from

the criteria what exactly will I be expecting from you? They

can go back again and again to these and say, "oh, I completely

forgot about something."

Right. I don't have to tell you. I will. But you can

catch it yourself. There's no reason for a student at the end

of the quarter to be surprised at their grade. No reason. In

fact, by the time they're done grading themselves, I ask them

to send me what they think. And 90 percent of the time,

I

agree completely. Sometimes not quite. So then I say, here's

what I think. But I've been giving them so much feedback that

it should be no big surprise. Then there's the videotapes.

They're signed in American Sign Language. They're captioned.

And it's several guests. Here's one. Remember, I consider

access also to be access to, shall I say links between

themselves and the material? These are "multicultural" link

possibilities. On this videotape are four students with

different cultural backgrounds. This is a bio from one of

them. These students on the videotape tell the teachers what

their experience was like. What was andy's experience? With

an Asian background at home and a Caucasian, WASP background in

school, WAST means white -- somebody tell me? Anglo American

Protestant? Were there misunderstandings? I'll give you one

example. Some of the Asian students that we've had in my

previous courses would be evaluated from my perspective from an

American WASP perspective as not willing to participate in

class and not looking directly at me. Come on, I'm trying to

talk to you, look at me, you know. Not much participation. If

I don't think about that a little bit and get to know something

about different cultural proper behaviors in different

cultures, I might give a lower grade for that person. Because

that's not what I want. I want you to jump in. Why aren't you

doing that? That's one example. I have a thousand. So these

students tell us what we need to know and how we could better

teach them.

Then there were some teachers. Deaf and hearing. They

teach deaf students and they explain how they include into all

their subjects, doesn't matter what the subject, they include

those links to deaf experiences in everyday life.

Parents. Deaf and hearing. They share with the class the

experiences, both good and bad, that they've had with

teachers

in the school systems.

Students who are deaf and -- deaf and perhaps have cerebral

palsy or perhaps have Usher's Syndrome. Or something else.

Physical challenge. And who are deaf and have some form of

learning disability or challenge. Which doesn't mean that

they're not smart and can't do it. It just means it's tough.

They're going to need another way to get to the information.

They tell us their best and worst.

The product. This should be in their area of study,

whatever that is. If they're going to do math, fine, do it

math. They develop a unit which covers at least five classes

which they should be able to use completely, ready, walk out of

the class with this thing ready. Or very close. They send an

outline, three drafts and the model. They send it to me

online. I respond in a different color on their plan. I send

it back. I like first-class because that's the platform, the

software, I like it because I can keep always a copy of

what

they sent me first and what I sent back.

When they send me the next draft, I pull up the response I

gave to them the last time. And I can say, "good. They

addressed that." or, "forgot. Go back and look at the

feedback the first time. I didn't ask questions just to be

silly."

This next slide is an example which has too many words on

it. Don't try to read it all. I just want to point out a few

things. One student had been to Australia and wanted to

include in his future classes a unit about aboriginals in

Australia. But these are some ways in which he made links to

people coming from different places: Deaf, different cultures,

and made sure that the material was both physically accessible

to someone with a physical -- other physical disability, but

also discussion.

So he wants to use one of those -- anybody know? Did you

redo? It's a long instrument that makes a very deep sound. I

don't know how to spell it. He wants to get into a discussion

with the class of music and this instrument. And how you can

appreciate it. He also wants to talk about the effect and

interactions of the Europeans and the aboriginals in Australia.

And then he wants to make a link to how does this compare to

deaf/hearing interactions? He wants to set up an Email writing

contact. And discuss that. He wants to talk about aboriginal

art on rocks. Which is considered art. And then he wants to

say, "when you see the side of a building in the United States

with what we call gra feety, -- Grafiti, not good, people

writing on walls, people making pictures on walls and fancy

signatures. He wants to ask: How is that different from

aboriginal work on art -- on rocks? So that it goes on and on.

But wonderful links.

We have teams that work together. And they all are expected

to share their evolving unit plans with each other, send the

whole thing, talk about it, discuss it. They're not in

competition. Even if it's the same subject they're teaching,

they'll approach it differently. So they can send ideas and

suggestions and reactions back and forth. At the end, each

student makes a PowerPoint slide show. For the classes who are

here, they present in person. But for the students in Puerto

Rico and Kentucky and Albany, they send the PowerPoint slide

show and they send a script, word for word what am I going to

say when you read that? What would I say if you were sitting

right in front of me? This is a quick example. This focusing

on the English ASL dictionary. So this makes use of a guest.

This touches on the fact that many different cultures have

different explanations, different cultural stories that relate

to the universe. And then a trip. This is a link to a very

common, fun way of using sign language within the deaf culture.

Creating stories with letters of the alphabet. I have seen

some of the most fabulous stories where you go straight through

the alphabet, A, B, and it depends on the shape of the hand.

Take advantage of this fantastic, creative ability that's out

there and ask the students to come up with an ABC story using

the first letter of each planet, in order of where they are

from the sun, out. And share that with the rest of the group.

Now, that one I can't do in an online course, but she's

creating it for her inclass course, which is important.

Visual, that's an obvious one. And the use of drawing for

students whose strength is in that area. I mention that

before. There are discussion boards. One of the reasons I

like the class when it's here and I can use both online and the

face-to-face is because I can also ask the students, all of

them, deaf and hearing, who all should be able to sign by the

time they get to me, at least one of their journals to be in

ASL. Not in English. I haven't reached a point yet where

I

can do that tech no logically, especially if they're out there

and may not have access to that. I can't ask them to do that

yet. Some day somebody will tell me how to do that. The

important points in making this as accessible as possible even

within a mostly text-based online program for me is the

informality and the sharing and the teamwork. I care about the

English in the final product. I don't care if they get help

from somebody else. But for the everyday discussions, I don't

care. I want discussion. Frequent communication. Examples

and guidelines. Wide variety, et cetera. And creating the

links as much as possible between experience and whatever topic

we're discussing. For example, in math, one person uses the

statistics from the census bureau, way back statistics, 1834

census, I think it was. How many people were identified as

deaf? What was it called? Back then, slavery. How many

black/African-Americans were identified as deaf? And

what was

it called then? All kinds of things can be learned from one

little census and used in every course that you teach. You

can't always use the real high-tech stuff that you see here.

If you can't, for whatever reason, what can you do to make your

mostly text-based teaching at the moment, hopefully could

change more later, what can you do to make that more accessible

in many ways? And by the way, the hearing students loved all

of the modifications. It helped them tremendously. And that

is the end of my presentation. We have 10 minutes in case

anybody wants to ask anything. It is awfully hot in here,

isn't it?

>> I have a question. I'm sorry, I arrived late. Who is

signing for me? I'm sorry. I arrived late. But I'm curious.

Which online program are you using? Is it PowerPoint? Or is

it blackboard? Or 6.0? Or what are you using?

>> DR. De CARO: I'm using first-class.

>> Oh, okay.

>> DR. De CARO: I prefer it myself. I'll sign for myself

when I'm talking, yeah. I prefer it because it's very

flexible. There's a lot you can do with first-class.

Blackboard, prometheus and some of the others are more quickly

learned. They're more "user friendly." But they're limited

in what you can do. And because I'm trying to do as much as

possible with the limitations of having to use mostly the

written form, I want as wide a possible different uses as I can

do, and first-class is good.

>> What kind of limitations does it have?

>> DR. De CARO: You mean first-class or the others?

>> Blackboard.

>> DR. De CARO: Blackboard? I don't know if you were here

for where I mentioned the -- when they bring or send the unit

plan and I respond in a different color and send? I can keep

that and bring up -- it's it saves everything. Blackboard

doesn't save. For me, that's one big disadvantage.

Blackboard

is something called "cookie cutter." Somebody else decides

what I can do. I'm trying to be as creative as possible with

this online thing, and first-class allows me to do all kinds of

different things. Blackboard is somebody else's idea of what I

want to do. And I keep getting frustrated like. But I want to

do this. Sorry, can't do that. So that's what I mean.

>> How accessible is first-class to blind use ares? {PROF}.

>> DR. De CARO: It is accessible in two ways. You can have

huge font. You can change the background colors. Of course,

in addition, a person who is blind is likely also to have

special computer equipment so that whether it's first-class or

not, they will have the access on the computer itself, their

computer, but not the program. Is that what you meant?

>> Well, kind of. But with blackboard, they have some

barriers in equal access to blind users. So I would prefer to

use first-class. But I herd some people have had problems with

first-class because some of the programming or -- there are

barriers to blind people. So I was just wondering. I haven't

seen it in deaf first-class, so --

>> DR. De CARO: I have had students in the class who had

Usher's Syndrome. They were not completely blind. For them,

the large font and change in color contrast was fine. I have

not yet experienced having a student who is completely blind,

so I don't know. I would like to sit down and talk with

someone who has struggled with that question. Because that's

something else that I would like to -- I don't know yet. So

that's a good question. I will find out. Thank you.

>> Doesn't NTID or RIT use WebCT?

>> DR. De CARO: Yes. I have not.

>> Isn't that in the stipulations that you had? It is fully

accessible for blind as well as deaf?

>> DR. De CARO: So it might be that that, in the end, be

better than first-class?

>> I think so.

>> DR. De CARO: You think so. So that would be

interesting. I'll go check that. Students from -- I've had
a

variety of experiences. With the the first-class, you get
a

piece of software in the mail. You install it right into
your

computer. You don't have to contact through web TV.
You don't

have to -- you've got it. Of course you still have to make

your connection, your Internet connection. I've herd
pluses

and minuses about that. Sometimes students are very
frustrated

with trying to get in through the web. They can, but
they find

it very frustrating. That might affect the other system.

Sometimes students find first-class to be very
frustrating,

especially in the beginning.

>> Do you offer some kind of remediation on how to
use the

program to the students prior to teaching?

>> DR. De CARO: That's an important point. We have a
very

strong and very helpful group of people who are essentially

always there. Maybe they don't sleep. They're always there to

help. With first-class, questions about technology, et cetera,

go straight to the help people. They don't even ask me. It's

worked out directly that way. Sometimes people have fire

walls. They're taking the course from work. They hit a fire

wall. They can't get in. They work it out with the tech

people. Not with me.

I get a tremendous amount of help. Any time I'm stuck, I

contact people.

So I think that for someone like me, who finds technology

daunting, having a really supportive and knowledgeable staff

makes it possible for me to do that. Without it, I couldn't do

it. I wouldn't. I'd stop right now and turn it off. So I

think that's terribly critical, both for the students and for

me. And we're lucky to have it.

I actually enjoyed teaching this way now. This is a

strange

thing for me to say. But I enjoy it. The students have said

to me, deaf and hearing, whether it's in class or distance,

that they like the fact that they can constantly go back and

forth with me, with the requirements of the course, with the

criteria, with each other, and they can do it any time, day or

night. They've really liked that.

For the deaf students for whom the English is a challenge,

they have told me that they appreciate the fact that, A, I'm

not grading for English. B, they got a whole week to think

about something, to make changes, to show it to somebody and

say "how do I say this?"

It's a whole week. It's not: Right there. Tell me now.

Or "write me a paper, a whole paper."

Most of these things are short. So I've gotten good

feedback from deaf and hearing students, particularly about

those things and particularly about making those links

with

either their cultures or their experience in life. It allows

them to teach others, too. I don't have to know everything. I

don't know everything. I would like for them to teach

everybody. That's it. Thank you very much. [CHEERS AND

APPLAUSE.]

>> What is the name of the course that you teach?

>> DR. De CARO: It's a good question. I never thought of

that. It's a long name. I must change it. It is "deaf

students: Educational and cultural diversity."

But if I say diversity only, people think I mean cultural

only and I don't mean only that. I mean you have students in

the class and there's a lot of them who are all different. Oh

my gosh. 4606/1, .02 percent)