Chapter 7

Trial and Error with Assistive, Accessible, Augmentative Technology

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the author’s experiences in using assistive technology in undergraduate teaching. He argues for the importance of recognizing social factors that contribute to inequalities involving people with disabilities. The objective is to offer the simple, practical example of the author’s use of communications technology.

INTRODUCTION

This essay describes my experiences since 1995, teaching at the university level, and using assistive technology. My hope and purpose in writing this essay is that my experiences will not be “exceptional,” since technology works at its best when it is “seamless” and mundane.

CASE

I have taught Political Science at Chapman University in Orange, California since 1981. Most of my teaching is in International Relations. Since 1995 I have developed Disability Studies courses, People with Disabilities in Politics and Society, and Disability and the Law. In every course, given the potential for assistive technology worldwide, my means of communication are, to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, the media as well as an important part of the message.

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