**Breaking down the binary: Writing from positions of (dis)ability**
*An annotated bibliography*

Some disabilities are more visible than others. A wheelchair or limp, for example, are easier to *see* than dyslexia or Asperger Syndrome. It's hard to deny blindness when a white cane is present, or deafness when sign language is used. But most disabilities are more complicated and multi-faceted than visibility or invisibility suggests, manifesting themselves across physical, neurological, and social boundaries. Down Syndrome, for example, involves complex physical and neurological manifestations while also existing within a web of social conditions that represent the syndrome in various ways (stigmatizing, heroic, etc.). In short, disabilities seem to involve the "corporeal and cultural differences we carry with us—or that others believe we carry" that Vandenberg, Hum, and Clary-Lemon describe in *Relations, Locations, Positions* (14). What happens, then, when disability, which has often been neatly corralled off into categories and diagnoses, medications and treatments, gets messy? What happens when disability starts blurring into ability, when we can no longer sustain the binary between normal and abnormal, abled and disabled?

This bibliography will explore these questions in terms of theories of position, positing that like race, class, and gender, disability can be considered as a position from which writers write, a position that composes the writer's identity while simultaneously being composed by the writer. What does it mean for composition studies to add disability to the existing triad, and why is it important to do so? Further, what are the implications for composition theorists and for writers that disability is both physically embodied and socially constructed, that it's more complicated than the comfortable binaries through which it is often viewed? When the theoretical implications of the social construction of disability contend with the very real, material positions in which writers find themselves, we must consider what implications this tension has for writers and theorists on all points along the spectrum of ability-disability. Finally, how do we move toward considering disability in theories of position?

As James C. Wilson describes in "Evolving Metaphors of Disease in Postgenomic Science: Stigmatizing Disability," the way we discuss disability has historically been informed by what he claims are harmful and stigmatizing metaphors that continue to perpetuate an "unfortunate legacy of discrimination" against individuals with disabilities (200). In describing the history of discourse surrounding disability, Wilson illuminates some of the deeply rooted and often negative lenses through which we view disability—as divergent from normal, as socially deviant, as genetically defective. Wilson's attention to the "language in action" surrounding disability is critical to any inquiry into theories of position, as Vandenberg *et al* describe in *RLP*, and his work helps us address the question of why disability hasn't always been considered a valid position for writers. Like Wilson, Harvey Molloy and Latika Vasil also provide important historical context for discussing disability studies in "The Social Construction of Asperger Syndrome: the pathologising of difference?" in which they argue for the re-framing of Asperger Syndrome (AS) as the result of competing social constructions and political forces in addition to material neurological differences, instead of as strictly the personal, pathological disease promoted by dominant medical approaches to disability. Their argument rests on the claim that disability diagnoses are convenient and valuable categories for special education and, more broadly, educational institutions, which holds direct implications for the power relations and politics writing teachers will encounter when bringing disability into the writing classroom.

According to the theorists like James Berlin and Gary Olson, writing is always already

ideological, so any discussion of writers' positions necessitates attention to the sort of ideology that Wilson and Molloy and Vasil begin to explore. Mark Mossman in "Visible Disability in the College Classroom" calls for a deconstruction of "oppressive metanarratives" like the normal-abnormal binary, infused with dominant ideology like the medical model Wilson describes, before writing from positions of disability can be fully affirmed in the classroom (652). Mossman claims that a classroom environment in which disability is made visible and authenticated as a valid position will challenge the dominant ideology and allow students to "claim power, equality, and volition" (656). William P. Banks, like Mossman, calls for a return to embodied writing, which he extends to personal writing, in "Written through the Body: Disruptions and 'Personal' Writing." Banks argues that if students aren't free and encouraged to write from their gendered, sexualized, disabled bodies, they will be forced to submit to dominant ideology and dominant discourse and will lack the opportunity to challenge the institutions and ideas that oppress their lived, bodily experiences. Illustrating from his own experiences, Banks provides one example of how we might enact writing from disability positions in the classroom.

For Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, any attempt to validate disability as a position for writers should involve an examination of how rhetoric operates for individuals with disabilities. Rhetoric, she argues in "Rethinking Rhetoric through Mental Disabilities," must be re-viewed as more than just a language-centric, individual enactment. It should include "collaborative and mediated rhetoric, co-constructed by the disabled and their advocates through a reading of bodily rhetoric" (164). Her attention to the rhetoric of the body is of particular interest to this inquiry, and Kristie S. Fleckenstein in "Words Made Flesh: Fusing Imagery and Language in a Polymorphic Literacy" provides another way of thinking about literacy that mirrors Lewiecki-Wilson reframing of rhetoric. Fleckenstein argues that a polymorphic approach to literacy explores "the subtle tension among kinds of images … and modalities of images … offering a different entry into meaning" (616-17). While Amy Vidali criticizes Fleckenstein's failure to actually discuss how polymorphic literacy works with and for disabled individuals, Fleckenstein's approach is no less a valuable foray into new ways of thinking about writing and writing subjects and extends Lewiecki-Wilson's theoretical discussion into a more concrete example of what re-thinking literacy (and rhetoric) might look like.

Vidali's own work, of which "Performing the Rhetorical Freak Show: Disability, Student Writing, and College Admissions" is included in this bibliography, employs an unexpected theoretical lens through which to view disability and writing—freak-show theory. Vidali analyzes college admissions essays written by three students with learning disabilities and in doing so underscores the politics of writing that several authors in this bibliography and countless others have already established. She also extends these established theories using her own freak-show approach to work toward a better understanding of the rhetorical politics of disability in writing, specifically. Like Banks, Vidali is interested in embodied writing, on what it really means for students to write from their own bodily experiences and to put their disabilities on spectacle for others to gawk at, observe, and perhaps eventually accept as valid or different instead of defective. Vidali's project is really about bringing disability "out of the wings" through research and scholarship on embodied student writing (635).

While other theorists in disability studies and rhetoric and composition may view the abled-disabled or normal-abnormal binaries as *part* of the problem scholars encounter when bringing disability into the classroom, or *part* of the problem of why disabled individuals are stigmatized or viewed under a dominant medical model, Robert McRuer argues in "Composing Bodies; or, De-Composition: Queer Theory, Disability Studies, and Alternative Corporealities"

that these binaries are *the* problem. His work aims to introduce "alternative and multiple corporealities" that will refocus attention on "the composing bodies in our classrooms" and away from what he views as harmful and unnecessary binaries (50). By connecting queer theory and disability studies, McRuer builds a strong argument against "straight composition," or composition that demands "composed/docile texts, skills, and bodies" (68) and works toward breaking down the very idea of composure, here echoing Banks' emphasis on a fragmented body and mind that are gendered, sexualized, disabled—in short, bodies that are messy, blurring the lines between normal and abnormal, abled and disabled. Linda Ware argues similarly in "Writing, Identity, and the Other: Dare We Do Disability Studies?" that the ability-disability binary is "the root of all binarisms that inform social formations such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability" (112), the problem to be addressed. While Ware primarily examines K-12 writing classrooms, her solution is still valuable to consider: make disability visible in the writing classroom, talk about it, recognize that it is a means by which people who are different are oppressed for their difference. She also offers pedagogical examples of how this visibility can be enacted in the classroom.

In "Making Disability Visible: How Disability Studies Might Transform the Medical and Science Writing Classroom," James C. Wilson also promotes the visibility of disability in the writing classroom—in this case, the medical and scientific writing classroom. Wilson argues that incorporating a disability studies perspective with the already-present post-colonial, postmodern, and feminist critiques of scientific knowledge and language will strengthen these critiques and build a stronger case for the social constructionist model of disability. Wilson argues for a disability perspective as a methodology with which students can examine the "social agenda" promoted by scientific language in the technical writing classroom (159). Finally, in "Becoming Visible: Lessons in Disability," Brueggemann et al illuminate a wide range of issues related to their primary argument that disability must be made visible and composition studies is the field to accomplish this. From theoretical to practical discussions, the authors argue from a disability studies perspective that binaries like those the other authors in this bibliography argue against (abled-disabled, normal-abnormal) and even those not discussed by others (theory-practice, writing-thinking, self-other) must be reconsidered and broken down for disability to be validated in the writing classroom.

The authors, articles, theories, and practices presented in this bibliography are by no means homogeneous—in fact, to the contrary, they often dispute each other, whether in the broader theories they posit or in the classroom practices they promote. They may arrive at similar conclusions about the importance and value of disability as positional, but the texts here represent the myriad ways of arriving at these conclusions and the various and diverse consequences for the ways of thinking presented here. The lack of homogeneity is precisely why these texts are valuable to an inquiry into the questions I first outlined. At stake in this discussion, and in the broader fields of disability and composition studies, is an upset in the way we think of writing and writers, in what it means to be a disabled/abled (or temporarily able-bodied) writer, and in what it means to blur the lines between abled and disabled, normal and abnormal. These are serious upsets, the consequences of which help us understand why borrowing from disability studies, rhetoric and composition, technical writing, scientific discourse, and the other perspectives represented in this bibliography is so critical—the implications of validating disability as position are wide-reaching and significant, with potential to transform these fields and others, of which composition studies is just one.

**Banks, William P. "Written through the Body: Disruptions and 'Personal' Writing." *College English*. 66.1 (2003): 21-40. Print.**

Through a remarkably personal essay in which he uses various "figures" (stories) from his own life and analyzes these figures in terms of embodiment, Banks argues for the reintegration of embodied writing in the theory and practice of composition. He challenges the notion that composition classrooms should be "sterile, lifeless," calling instead for teaching and writing that is "gendered, sexualized," that contains "markers of identity," and that is ultimately rich with "transformative potential" for teachers and writers (22). Embodied writing, he argues, "requires writers to foreground their sense of self at the same time that they consider the social implications" of their writing (35), striking a delicate balance between bodily, material aspects of the self and the differences socially constructed around these positions. While Vidali criticizes Banks' overextension of "embodied" writing to mean "personal" writing, Banks is more interested in embodiment for the sake of dismantling boundaries that occur in academic settings, like race, class, gender, and disability. Nevertheless, both authors identify the risks involved in disclosure of just those positions, and Banks claims that since disclosure occurs through the body, embodied writing is critical to breaking down the binaries implicit in these positions. Banks fears that unless students are free to write from their bodies, as gendered, sexualized, disabled individuals, they will be "forced to subsume their bodies and epistemologies and put on the 'normal discourse' … produced through the bodies of straight white males," invoking Rorty's discussion of "normal discourse" and Bartholomae's of academic discourse (30).

Banks argues not only that "writing through our bodily experiences" is epistemologically powerful and creates meaning, but also that this writing can be as critical, rigorous, disciplined, responsible, and ethical as the writing we see produced in composition classrooms and published in academic journals (34). Further, Banks notes the contingency of bodies, an important marker of writers' positions according to the *RLP* authors, arguing that "our bodies, though seemingly whole, are fragmented, because our bodies-as-we-understand-them are conscious (and unconscious) extensions of not only our own minds, but also the minds around us" (23). This work holds value for an inquiry into disability as position and the process of breaking down binaries because breaking down binaries is precisely what his essay does. Banks skillfully manages to both discuss and enact what he argues for—embodied writing—by using his own figures and tropological fragments to dismantle positional boundaries for his (presumably academic) audience. Embodied, personal writing of the sort Banks discusses and produces is one example of how we might go about enacting disability as position in the writing classroom.

*Key search terms: Embodied writing, personal writing, figures, fragments, embodied rhetoric*

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Kimberly Coon

**Brueggemann, Brenda Jo, Linda Feldmeier White, Patricia A. Dunn, Barbara Heifferon, and Johnson Cheu. "Becoming Visible: Lessons in Disability."** ***College Composition and Communication*****. 52.3 (2001): 368-98. Print.**

Also published in the *RLP* book in addition to *College Composition and Communication*, this article provides a valuable overview of why increasing awareness of disability in composition studies is important and how it might be done. The authors all illuminate different aspects of what it means to make disability "visible" in the composition classroom and in composition theory. Their primary claim is that a move toward "enabling composition," or re-conceptualizing disability in composition, will make "disabilities and people with disabilities … visible," and it will also make visible "the continuum that links 'abled' … with 'disabled'" (371). The authors intend to promote a re-framing of disability that "uncovers harmful notions of 'normal/normalcy'" (372) and argue that composition studies is the ideal place for this re-framing to occur since the field has "a long, proud history of making the invisible visible and of examining how language both reflects and supports notions of Other" (371). Briefly, Brueggemann discusses both what is meant by the invisibility of disability and the paradoxical construction of disability as invisible; White explores the disability studies perspective on the social construction of disability; Dunn examines the harmful rhetoric that has contributed to the negative construction of disability, discussing some of the same metaphors Wilson discusses in "Evolving Metaphors"; Heifferon gives an example of how disability might be made visible in the writing classroom, describing a text she used with her students and their responses; and Cheu examines an actual disability-based writing course, "Cultures and Literatures of Disability," and how it challenged students to consider disability, and in particular to consider the binaries that often dictate our thinking about disability.

By virtue of multiple authors, multiple perspectives, and multiple research questions covered in one article (many of which are the same types of questions I pose in this bibliography), this article is an excellent starting point for delving into these issues, and was in fact my own starting point for developing this bibliography. Taken together, the authors' perspectives cohere into a rallying cry for a disability studies perspective in writing classrooms. Taken individually, sub-questions arise, new research avenues become visible—and, importantly, the theories, practices, attitudes, and ideas that are addressed in any given composition theory course are addressed here, through the lens of disability studies.

*Key search terms: Disability studies, enabling composition, visible disability, social construction of disability*

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**Fleckenstein, Kristie S. "Words Made Flesh: Fusing Imagery and Language in a Polymorphic Literacy."** ***College English*****. 66.6 (2004): 612-31. Print.**

In this article, Fleckenstein explores the notion of polymorphic literacy, or "reading and writing that draw on verbal and nonverbal ways of shaping meaning" (613), and argues that a polymorphic approach "enables us to approach literacy as a performance that involves both language and images" (614). Like Lewiecki-Wilson, Fleckenstein is interested in de-privileging language as the central component of communication and literacy, arguing instead for "the more reciprocal dynamic implicit within polymorphic literacy" (614). According to Fleckenstein, polymorphic literacy encompasses an understanding of composition that includes the production of images and words along with the multiliteracies approach foregrounded by the New London Group (see Cope and Kalantzis). "Meaning consists of a web, an ecology of symbol systems feeding into and evolving out of on another," she argues, invoking both Cooper's ecology of writing theory and Spinuzzi's genre ecology approach. Fleckenstein's focus specifically on the interplay between words and images sets her argument apart from these, however. She argues for an approach that explores "the subtle tension among kinds of images (mental, graphic, etc.) and modalities of images (visual, kinesthetic, etc.), offering a different entry into meaning" (616-17).

Despite Vidali's criticism of Fleckenstein for failing to discuss disability in this piece even considering the obvious importance and potential benefits polymorphic literacy could bring to disability studies and specifically disability in composition studies, this article provides more possible avenues by which we might enact disability as position in the classroom. Polymorphic literacy, as Vidali emphasizes, may in fact be a necessity for some individuals with disabilities, so Fleckenstein's exploration of this topic can provide not only a critique of what we generally call "literacy" but also a pedagogical approach to integration of disability as position in the writing classroom. By considering more than just language in composition, Fleckenstein's argument may also open up possibilities for a conception of disabilities as, like Molloy and Vasil describe, neurological differences that are valid and interesting, not defective or deviant. A polymorphic orientation, she argues, "renders words flesh" and connects "language to image, increasing the scope and power of our literacy and our literacy teaching" (630).

*Key search terms: Polymorphic literacy, imagery, literacy, semiotic systems, multiliteracies, multimodality, visual rhetoric*

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**Lewiecki-Wilson, Cynthia. "Rethinking Rhetoric through Mental Disabilities." Rhetoric Review 22.2 (2003): 154-202. Print.**

Published as part of a *Rhetoric Review* symposium on "Representing Disability Rhetorically," this article examines designations of what rhetoricity and rhetorical agents are and how these conceptions of rhetoric affect disabled individuals. She argues that by considering how people with disabilities experience the world in material ways and what their needs are, we can revise our understanding of rhetorical action beyond just individual speech and writing to include "collaborative and mediated rhetoric, co-constructed by the disabled and their advocates through a reading of bodily rhetoric" (164). Like Banks and McRuer, Lewiecki-Wilson advocates a return to the body as central to an understanding of the positions from which writers write (and really, the ways writers exist in the world). A shift in understanding of rhetoricity, she argues, rests on a shift from speech-driven concepts to rhetoric as potentiality, a term derived from Kennedy's translation of an Aristotelian definition of rhetoric. Rhetoricity, Lewiecki-Wilson claims, does not "reside in, nor depend on, speech, text, or any particular technology of communication" (161). Lewiecki-Wilson, not interested in furthering existing binaries for disabled individuals or proposing new ones, also defends "both the social construction of all disabilities as well as their very real 'out-there-ness,' that is, their very real human embodiment as both a condition of nature and culture" (158). By acknowledging both arguments and extending them to include language as both material and culturally made, she says we can "construct more fully humane intersubjectivity" for severely disabled individuals and for those who have perhaps less obvious or visible disabilities (163).

Like Fleckenstein, Lewiecki-Wilson views writing as more than words and composing as more than linear. While Fleckenstein focuses on the confluence of words and images and doesn't discuss the application her theory has for disability studies, however, Lewiecki-Wilson's argument rests soundly in the interdisciplinary territory between disability studies and rhetoric and composition, which is precisely why it is so valuable to the inquiry I'm proposing in this bibliography. By moving beyond both language and images, the author's argument opens new possibilities for individuals with disabilities to compose from their actual lived, bodily experiences, which may include, for example, co-mediated rhetoric with a facilitator or assistant, the use of technological devices to communicate, or modes of communication not yet examined by the field of disability studies.

*Key search terms: Embodiment, bodily rhetoric, collaborative rhetoric, social construction of disability, mediated rhetoric*

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**McRuer, Robert. "Composing Bodies; or, De-Composition: Queer Theory, Disability Studies, and Alternative Corporealities."** ***JAC*****. 24.1 (2004): 47-78. Print.**

Like Banks, McRuer argues for attention to bodies and embodied writing in the writing classroom and to theorizing embodiment in composition. Specifically, McRuer argues for "alternative and multiple corporealities" that will refocus attention on "the composing bodies in our classrooms" (50). The contemporary university and writing classroom, he claims, serve a corporate model focused on producing efficient, disembodied, standardized, incorporeal writers—and for McRuer, a successful critique of current practices and processes requires re-focusing on composing bodies and "placing queer theory and disability studies at the center of composition theory" (50). McRuer's article then provides an extensive account of how queer theory and disability studies can work together to inform and re-create the contemporary writing classroom. Through an overview of the literature surrounding queer theory, disability studies, and composition theory, personal stories from his own experiences as an openly gay professor, and a case-study-type description of the current (and troubling) scenario in his own institution's writing programs, McRuer drives home the point that what he calls "straight composition" demands "composed/docile texts, skills, and bodies," but that queer theory and disability studies encourage positions that fall outside these binaries (68).

Like the *RLP* authors see a future for the composition classroom that moves beyond process, McRuer envisions a future *beyond* what he calls "straight composition" (69), one in which "new (queer/disabled) identities and communities might be imagined" (50). Citing the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, the gay University of Wyoming student who was beaten, tied to a deer fence, and left for dead by two young men in 1998, and the 100-plus mentally disabled group-home residents who died from unsafe, unsanitary, and abusive conditions from 1993-2004 in Washington, D.C., McRuer emphasizes that "heterosexual-queer and able-bodied-disabled binaries produce real and material distinctions" and consequences (58). McRuer's article can be used to explore not only what these distinctions and consequences are, but how they can be managed (positively) through the consideration of disability (and queerness) as a valid position for writers.

*Key search terms: Queer theory, disability studies, alternative corporealities, composing bodies, embodiment*

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**Molloy, Harvey, and Latika Vasil. "The Social Construction of Asperger Syndrome: the pathologising of difference?"** ***Disability & Society*****. 17.6 (2002): 659-69. Print.**

Through examining how Asperger Syndrome (AS) is diagnosed, the authors explore whether AS is "a disorder or a neurological difference that has been socially constructed as a disorder" (659). They contend that the medical approach, in which AS is defined as a neurological impairment, has dominated perceptions of AS. This model, they argue, places AS solely within the individual, pitting him against "normal social behavior" with no regard for "the network of social and political forces involved in the process of defining normal and abnormal behavior" (664). On the contrary, they claim that AS could never simply be located within the individual and that, like Wilson later explains, "no gene or discovery of different neurological 'wiring' arrangements will wholly explain AS" (665). The authors argue that AS has been pathologized into a category of disorder "because of its value as a category of special education" and that this approach now seems natural in special education (665). We can look to Gee's theories of discourse or Longo's history of science and technology to consider how dominant medical and scientific discourse has affirmed some knowledge as valid (pathologizing of AS) while marginalizing other knowledge (social construction of AS).

The point of the authors' argument is not to posit a singular social constructionist perspective, but to encourage re-framing of AS (indeed, of all impairments) around the competing social constructions and political forces that inform it. Critically examining categories like AS in terms of "how they are contextualized in our culture as opposed to viewing them as personal pathologies" (669) will reveal issues of representation, power, and politics, along with "the strengths associated with the condition" (668). Challenging the medical model, they argue, will re-position AS as "a valid and even interesting difference from the neurological norm" (668). While the authors don't directly address writing classrooms, the politics they reveal through examination of disability discourses suggest that these politics are also present in the writing classroom. Indeed, how teachers view students' disabilities—as personal pathologies, as social constructions, or as amalgams of real and constructed experiences—is critical to my inquiry. Further, the tension between the medical and social approaches is precisely where writing teachers will find themselves when they consider disability as a position from which students write.

*Key search terms: Power relations in disability, neurological difference, social construction of disability, medical model approach, alternative models of disability*

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**Mossman, Mark. "Visible Disability in the College Classroom." College English. 64.6 (2002): 645-59. Print.**

A single-leg amputee and professor of English, Mossman uses his own visible disability to explore "how disability is discovered, constructed, and performed … in the postmodern, undergraduate classroom" (645). Through accounts of his own experiences, Mossman argues that a "palpable tension" surrounds visibly disabled bodies in the classroom, a tension that "is composed of both a real agency and a supreme lack of agency" (646). Mossman claims that this tension is partly the result of "a rigid dichotomy of normality and abnormality" (647) and that a deconstruction of "oppressive metanarratives" (652) like that of normality must occur to make room for writing from positions of disability to be fully affirmed in the classroom. Like Banks' emphasis on personal writing, Mossman argues that "classroom environments grounded in students' and instructors' autobiographical speech acts or stories" will be the primary catalyst toward a reconceptualization disability as difference instead of deviance (652). Mossman's greater cause is to empower writers through the telling of their stories to "resist the oppressive force of the master discourse by taking control of his or her narrative and constructing it as he or she chooses" (653), here invoking Gee's notion of dominant discourses that bring social goods and power to those who inhabit them (and are of course inhabited by them).

Mossman describes how, when he made his own disability even more visible in his college writing classroom by revealing his prosthetic leg, something remarkable happened. First, he explains, "it got weird; it got real weird" (654). His students didn't know how to respond, how to manage the tension between a desire to see sameness and inclusion and a desire to observe and understand a body different from theirs. Eventually, however, the uncertainty gave way to "an undermining of stereotype, the construction of a new story of disability" that resisted binaries and poles (655). Mossman argues that classroom environments like this, where disability is made visible and embraced as a valid position from which individuals write, will allow students to "claim power, equality, and volition … through the autobiographical demonstration of personhood" (656). This article, valuably, both theorizes what disability is and what it means to authenticate it as a valid position and demonstrates an actual pedagogical enactment of disability made visible in the classroom.

*Key search terms: Visible disability, autobiographical writing, disability studies, disability in the writing classroom, embodied writing*

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**Vidali, Amy. "Performing the Rhetorical Freak Show: Disability, Student Writing, and College Admissions."** ***College English*****. 69.6 (2007): 615-41. Print.**

Through an analysis of college admissions essay by three students with learning disabilities and interviews with these students, Vidali explores the discourses surrounding "disability, identity, and institutional writing to better understand the rhetorical politics of disability" (616). In her case-study approach, Vidali employs an unusual but useful freak-show theory to re-view these texts and "emphasize the rhetorical risks and rewards of disclosing disability" (623). Her primary argument is that a "fresh theoretical frame" is needed to better understand these risks, because current discussion of embodied student writing (or the positions in which students write) tends to omit disability. For example, Vidali criticizes Fleckenstein's "Words Made Flesh," not because she disagrees with the campaign for polymorphic literacy, but because Fleckenstein fails to consider that polymorphic approaches "may not only be pedagogically and theoretically useful, but are in fact required by students whose bodies and minds function outside traditionally accepted classroom modalities" (619). Instead, argues Vidali, research and scholarship on embodied student writing should "bring disability out of the wings" and use disability as an "innovative lens through which to recognize the diversity of all student writers and writing" (635).

Vidali's discussion, in addition to employing an unexpected freak-show methodology and reminding us that disability studies requires outside-the-box thinking, makes valuable connections between disability and rhetoric, and disability in the writing classroom. Her extensive analysis of the three admissions essays and interviews provides a pertinent example of how dominant discourses—academic discourse in this case, but science and medicine in others—continue to stigmatize and discriminate against students with disabilities. Further, it points toward important questions of power, empowerment, choice, and disclosure as students write from positions of disability in academic settings. Vidali argues not for the social construction of disability, like Molloy and Vasil, for but for disability as a theoretical lens, "a way of analyzing texts that challenges traditional theoretical and methodological approaches" (620). Vidali's other work on freak-show theory, rhetoric, and disabilities would also be useful to a project pursuing the research questions I outlined—this piece is one example of how her work contributes to my inquiry.

*Key search terms: Freak-show theory, disclosing disability, rhetorical risks, disability rhetoric*

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**Ware, Linda. "Writing, Identity, and the Other: Dare We Do Disability Studies?"** ***Journal of Teacher Education*****. 52.2 (2001): 107-23. Print.**

Addressing the complex issue of inclusive education in the K-12 classroom as mandated by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, Ware examines how the types of persistent assumptions described by other authors in this bibliography perpetuate in the writing classroom (through teachers) and suggests that new curriculum practices are necessary to fully implement inclusive education, beyond just what is legally required. Ware uses two different theoretical lenses to provide a critique of current "status quo assumptions about disability" (109): the Disability Rights Movement (DRM) and humanities-based disability studies. The DRM, she claims, seeks to "relocate the disability experience in social rather than biological constructs," while humanities-based disability studies works toward "problematizing the ability-disability binary" and emphasizes disability as "discursively and materially created" (110).

Like Molloy and Vasil, Ware sees diagnostic categories as valuable to societal institutions but detrimental to disabled individuals, who are stigmatized as defective, abnormal, and "other" in an abelist cultural landscape. Ware's primary claim is that disability needs to be made visible, be talked about, and be recognized as "a cultural signifier" and "a meaningful category of oppression" by critical theorists, pedagogues, and educators, whom she criticizes for perpetuating the ability-disability binary, which she claims is "the root of all binarisms that inform social formations such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability" (112).

Ware also describes her own experience as an educator attempting to validate disability as a position for studies through a writing class she co-taught called "Writing, Identity, and the Other." Like Mossman's and McRuer's accounts of teaching toward and with an awareness of disability as position, Ware's value to my inquiry is not only in her theoretical and historical overview of disability studies and what she calls the "new" disability studies, but also in her pedagogical example of the challenges teachers may and probably will encounter when they move into the uncomfortable territory of affirming disability (and race, and class, and gender) as a valid position for students. While her class and her research tends to focus on K-12 education, it's interesting and useful to read how mature and open her students were to discussing and enacting disability discourse in the writing classroom—we might consider teachers, not students, to be one of the barriers toward disability inclusion in the writing classroom.

*Key search terms: Disability studies, humanities-based disability studies, Disability Rights Movement, identity, ability-disability binary, normal-abnormal binary*

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**Wilson, James C. "Evolving Metaphors of Disease in Postgenomic Science: Stigmatizing Disability." *Rhetoric Review*. 22.2 (2003): 197-202. Print.**

Published as part of the same *Rhetoric Review* symposium on "Representing Disability Rhetorically" as Lewiecki-Wilson's "Rethinking Rhetoric through Mental Disabilities," Wilson's article recounts the history of genomic science and the past and present metaphors that have shaped research and attitudes surrounding disability and disease in medical science. Through a more technical approach to examining the tension between pathology and social constructionism of disability, Wilson argues that the tropes and metaphors used even in recent postgenomic discourse carry important consequences for people with disabilities. He begins by arguing that the human genome mapping project and subsequent "Book of Life" metaphor have perpetuated a conceptualization of disease/disability as" textual error and those in the biomedical community as editors who amend, delete, and correct the defective texts of disabled bodies" (197).

While more recent postgenomic perspectives focus attention on the network and interaction of genes rather than textual isolation of genes in determining traits, Wilson argues that even current rhetorical strategies in postgenomic society include "equally stigmatizing metaphors" (198). The human genome, he explains, is now conceptualized as "a social collective, divided into 'good citizen' and 'bad citizen' genes," and genes related to disease and disability are cast as "bad citizen" genes, as "misfits that subvert the social collective" (198). As is common in much medical discourse, military metaphors are also common in postgenomic discourse, and Wilson argues that taken together, current tropes are dangerously reminiscent of eugenics—of "identifying, controlling, and eliminating so-called 'defectives' so as to present them from passing on undesirable traits" (199). Wilson claims that the perpetuation of these rhetorical strategies in medical discourse reveals an "unfortunate legacy of discrimination" in which "physical difference has been transformed into social deviance" (200). According to these metaphors, he argues, "people with disease/disability are postgenomic defectives to be controlled or eliminated by genetic engineers" (200).

Wilson's account of how metaphors in scientific discourse shape disability perspectives is useful in examining how disability came to be viewed as it is and how these metaphors are likely to be embedded within perceptions of disability as position in the writing classroom. If these stigmatizing metaphors of disability as defectiveness are internalized, as Wilson suggests they are, we can expect to encounter difficulty in moving toward consideration of disability as a position the way race, class, and gender are.

*Key search terms: Metaphors of disease/disability, postgenomic disability discourse, pathology of disability, social construction of disability*

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**Wilson, James C. "Making Disability Visible: How Disability Studies Might Transform the Medical and Science Writing Classroom."** ***Technical Communication Quarterly*****. 9.2 (2000): 149-61. Print.**

While most of the authors who have addressed pedagogy in this bibliography have addressed it in the context of a composition classroom, Wilson brings an alternative perspective by addressing disability specifically in the technical writing classroom. This setting in particular illuminates the tension between a medical model of disability, as described by Molloy and Vasil, and a social constructionist model of disability, a perspective adopted and promoted by the Disability Rights Movement. In his technical writing classes, Wilson draws on feminist, post-colonial, and postmodern critiques of science to work toward "a theoretical understanding of science as a social construction" (150). In this article, he argues that a disability studies perspective "both complements and extends these more familiar critiques of science" and provides a new and unique way to connect and expand current critiques of scientific knowledge (150). This article is a useful extension of Wilson's other article I have included in this bibliography, as "Evolving Metaphors" discusses how disability came to be talked about and viewed the way it is (dominance of scientific knowledge and metaphors), while this piece explores how a technical writing teacher can begin breaking down these perspectives and challenging a medical model approach to disability in the classroom.

It's interesting and I think important to note that despite the usefulness of Wilson's theoretical stance and pedagogical suggestions to my inquiry, his work may be critiqued for its perpetuation of an "other" perspective, by which I mean that while the classroom curriculum and activities he presents *do* incorporate a disability studies perspective, but they do *not* do so in terms of validating disability as a position *for his writing students*. Instead, he focuses on using disability studies as a theoretical lens through which to re-view scientific knowledge. A disability perspective, he argues, "can become a 'critical modality,' a site and methodology" with which to examine the "social agenda" promoted by scientific language (159). His work no doubt supports the breaking down of binaries and critique of dominant scientific knowledge, an important step in moving toward authentication of disability as position, but this piece is an important reminder that incorporating a "disability studies perspective" in the writing classroom does not automatically equate to validating disability as a real, bodily, material position from which writers write.

*Key search terms: Disability studies in technical writing, social construction of science and disability, medical and scientific writing, contextualization,*

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