

Accessibility After the Pandemic: What Happens Now?

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

*Please be respectful of your colleagues by silencing your phone.
If you need to answer a call, please go to the hallway.*

Context



- The University of Phoenix still has some in-person classes at physical campuses in about 30 different locations
- Those classes transitioned from in-person meetings once a week to Bb Collaborate meetings once a week
- Faculty had very little exposure to Bb Collaborate before the switch was made
- Accessibility had been considered when adopting Collaborate but appropriate accommodations weren't always in place

Students at UOPX

- Overall student enrollment of almost 80,000 students
- Annually, almost 7900 students accommodated
- Annually, almost 13,000 students referred to Disability Services after disclosing a disability to an advisor or a faculty member
- Annual total headcount of just over 16,000 students with disabilities
- Medical diagnoses most often disclosed (cancer, fibromyalgia, etc.); mental health is a close second. Most students report more than one diagnosis.

Courses at UOPX

- Designed by faculty subject matter expert and instructional design staff from Center for Teaching & Learning.
- Faculty facilitate both in-person and online course sections from this master course.
- Courses are primarily 5- or 6-weeks long with limited courses lasting 8-weeks.
- Students mostly take 1 course at a time.

Staffing at UOPX

Accessibility & Disability Services:

- 1 director, 2 managers who supervise 19 advisors & handle escalated student situations

Accessibility & Usability Office:

- 1 Senior manager who supervises a curriculum accessibility manager and a digital accessibility specialist

All report to VP, Accessibility,
Equity & Inclusion



From On-campus to On-line (Synchronous)

What steps did we take?

Pivoting over a weekend



- Details regarding multiple state regulations where we operate were constantly in flux
- Communication to students, faculty and staff about the change
- Operations teams assembled daily to determine what we needed to do to support affected students
- Mostly positive feedback from students
- DS office tracked all disclosures from students re: COVID-19 and offered accommodations.

But what happens next?

- Return to in-person classes @UOPX pushed out to 2021
- Faculty development – how to teach in a Bb Collaborate environment? Not just the how-to's but also issues of access and pedagogy.
- Small team working on balance between in-person and online course work – how does it work when introducing this live component? What is the long-term strategy?

Access & accommodations with virtual class meetings

- What resources are faculty using/sharing that are different than in-person class meetings?
 - How do you or your faculty critically evaluate those resources?
- How do students and faculty reach out for help?
 - UOPX Referral system for student to disclosure to other student-facing staff and faculty

Disability Services & Accommodations

How do you meet the needs of your students in virtual and online classes?

Class at Home

- Different distractions
- Focus can be a challenge
- New requirements for assignment completion or demonstration of knowledge
- Time management will be crucial (especially for those with executive function limitations)

Proactive Outreach

- Determine students who will require more outreach during this change of modality
 - Some will navigate the change very well
 - Others may struggle
- Determine a cadence for regular check ins
- Individualize the support depending on the student need



Coaching Calls/Check Ins

- Incorporate time to check in with students after class starts
- How are they managing their time?
- Are there tips/strategies you can share with them?
- Do they need to set up a workspace at home, free from distractions?

Accommodations for Accessibility

- Traditional assignments do not always share over to the online environment in an accessible way!
- Reach out to faculty and work to determine potential solutions ahead of time:
 - Alternative assignments
 - Online lab options
 - Course Student Learning Outcome (CSLO) investigation to determine necessity, aka, fundamental alteration analysis

Change Environment (may) = Change Accommodations

- Students who did not require accommodations in person may now need them with online/remote learning
- UOP transitioned to Blackboard Collaborate classrooms during pandemic
 - CART services have increased due to this change

Accessibility & Usability

What do you need to have in place both short- and long-term?

Let's define some terms

Accessibility: addresses discriminatory aspects related to equivalent user experience for people with disabilities. Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can equally perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with websites and tools

Inclusion: is about diversity, and ensuring involvement of everyone to the greatest extent possible. In some regions this is also referred to as *universal design* and *design for all*. It addresses a broad range of issues including:

- accessibility for people with disabilities;
- access to and quality of hardware, software, and Internet connectivity;
- computer literacy and skills;
- economic situation;
- education;
- geographic location;
- culture;
- age, including older and younger people;
- and language.

Distinctions and Overlaps

Accessibility: addresses discriminatory aspects related to equivalent user experience for people with disabilities. Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can equally perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with websites and tools. It also means that they can contribute equally without barriers. For more information, see the [Accessibility introduction](#).

Usability: is about designing products to be effective, efficient, and satisfying. Usability includes *user experience design*. This may include general aspects that impact everyone and do not disproportionately impact people with disabilities. Usability practice and research often does not sufficiently address the needs of people with disabilities.

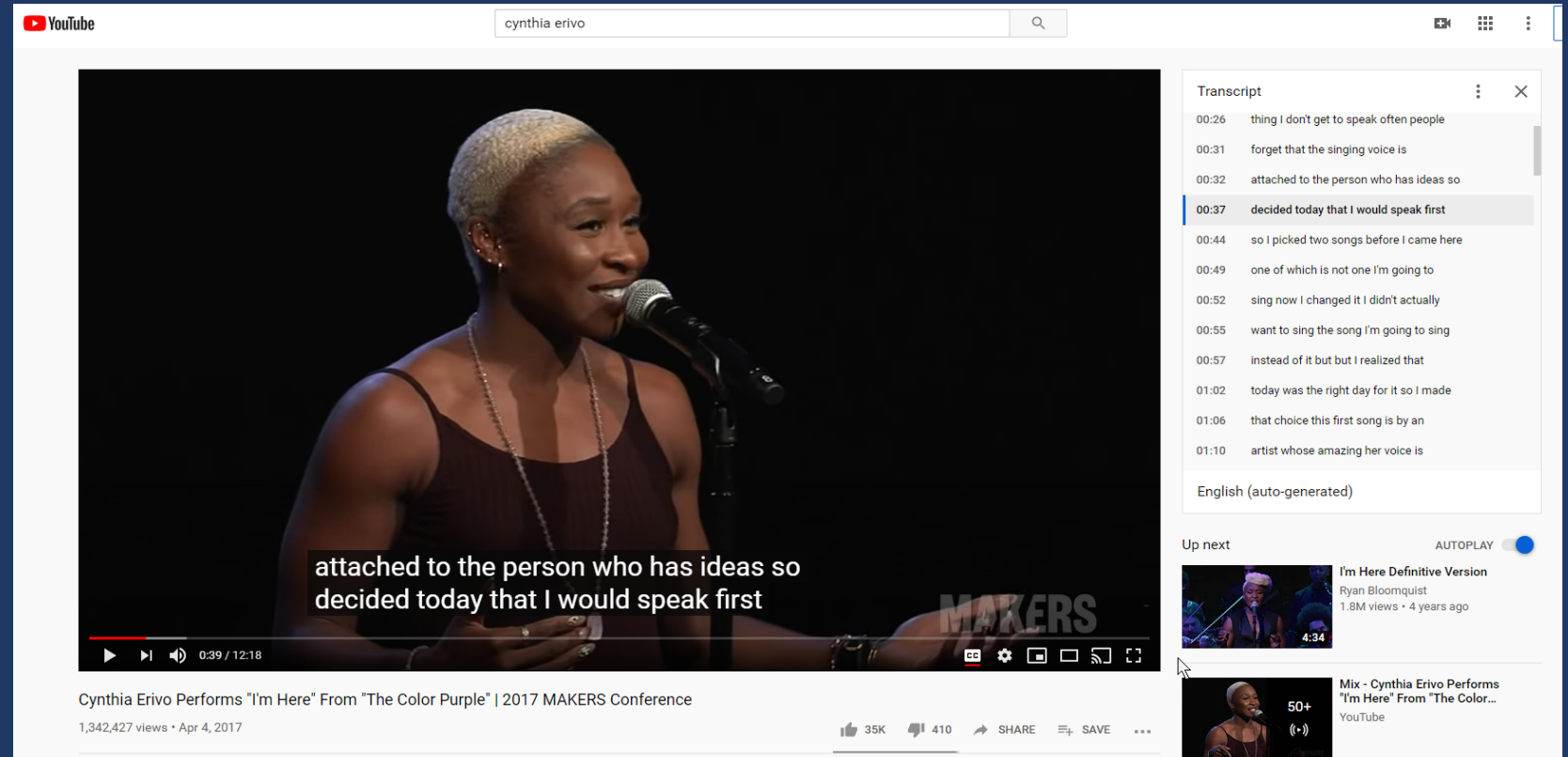
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<https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-usability-inclusion/>

Videos

- If I post a video for my students
- I need:
 - Captions
 - Transcripts



Captions and Transcripts

- Why do we need complete captions and transcripts?
 - For some, captions and transcripts help with better understanding in an additive way- seeing, hearing, and reading.
 - For others, accurate captions and transcripts may be the only way that the information is understandable. Inaccurate or incomplete meaning cannot be decoded.

Images, Charts, Graphics

- If I post images, charts, or other graphical content
- I need:
 - Alternative text
 - Label things
 - Text rather than images of text

References for the articles that appeared in the book "Accelerating the Learning of All Students: Cultivating Culture Change in Schools, Classrooms, and Individuals," by Christine Finn and Julie D. Swanson are presented.

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Acting on Changed Assumptions

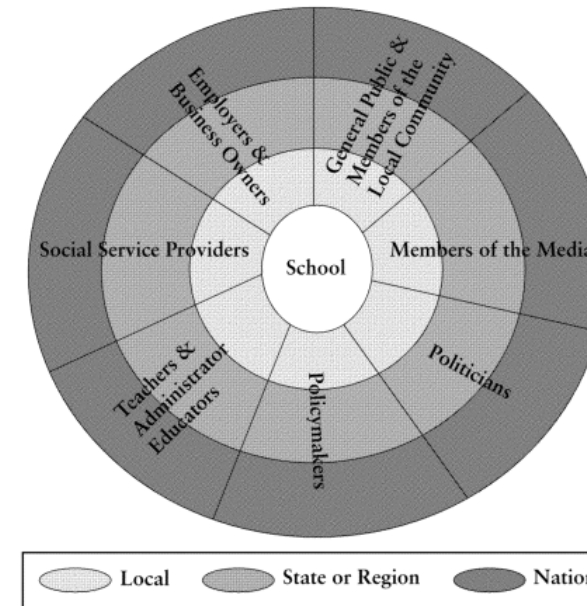


FIGURE 8.1 External Influences on School and Classroom Cultures

politicians, the manner in which the news media chooses to cover stories about schools all influence the culture created in schools and to a lesser degree in classrooms.

The individuals and groups that influence schools from the outside fall into many categories, and their influence varies depending on whether they reside in local communities or the wider society. Figure 8.1 describes the key groups of people in local communities, the state or region, and the nation that influence efforts to accelerate learning.

Image alternatives and full text

- Why do we need text descriptions of images and full text instead of images of text?
 - Using multiple representations builds understanding. If images are good for learning, then its context is should be explained for students who may not be able to access the image. Blind, visually impaired, and cognitive difficulties also want to understand the content
 - Images of text can't be accessed by assistive technology, can't be searched, can't be changed into other formats. Essentially they are invisible
 - Webpage text is the best for screen reader support

Other considerations

- Provide comparable alternatives. Pick content that has text, audio and video, and other different ways to jump into learning
- Color contrast. Make things easier to see and read
- Online can be more confusing. Reading online, finding information, pay attention, being in the same place and time as other students can be difficult. Provide outlines, tags, and other organizing methods of what you are teaching as access points.

Other considerations, cont.

- Test with a computer and on your smart phone.
 - Try fully interacting with just the keyboard
 - Use Ctrl +/- or Command +/- to magnify the browser screen and still be able to read
 - Is the experience good when using a smartphone?
- Some browsers have text-to-speech. Can you listen to the readings/webpage through the browser?



Procurement: Essential questions

Do ask:

- What accessibility standard has your company adopted for your products?
- How has your company verified the accessibility of your product?
- Do you use screen readers in testing your product?
- What accessibility documentation do you have for your product?

Don't ask:

- Is your product ADA compliant?
- Does your product meet ADA regulations?
- Can you provide me with a statement that you meet ADA requirements?

Evaluating accessibility: tools & products

- First, you need to know how the product will be used and what it is designed to help the students do.
- Look critically at accessibility documentation provided by the vendor - do they conduct testing using assistive technology? Have they contracted with an accessibility vendor to do their documentation (such as a VPAT)?
- Do they have an accessibility road map for future product releases?
- Can you see alternatives for non-text content? Captions? Alternative text on visual/graphical content?
- What does the user interface look like? How is color used? Are there timed elements that trigger activity or inactivity warnings?
- How about multiple inputs? Can you navigate the tool using basic keyboard shortcuts?

After the pandemic...

Improving access on your campus

Building the culture

- Starts first with understanding the current climate and culture of the institution
- Campus-wide approach – finding your new champions
- “What’s in it for me?”
- Professional development opportunities
- Policies and procedures
- Understanding the technology

Culture 101

- AKA, what will fly on your campus and what is a hard “no” regardless of how it is pitched?
- Critically important to understand the unwritten rules of how things get done on campus.
 - Who are the power brokers on campus?
 - How does the campus react to external demands and regulations?
 - What population has the most influence? Are issues pushed from a student-centric perspective? Do folks say that everything is student-centric and –focused but their arguments are typically faculty, administrative or staff focused?
 - What is the governance structure like?
 - How often do you hear arguments about academic freedom from your faculty?

Determine your who, what, when, where and why.

1. What standard will you follow?
2. When will you ask key accessibility related questions, provide alternative formats as needed and ask vendors/suppliers for needed resources?
3. Where are your stakeholders (students, parents, faculty/staff, general public) accessing your resources and how does that influence accessibility?
4. Who is responsible when something is not accessible?
5. Why is this important for your class, department or institution? Do you know your stakeholders and their needs? Are there students without disabilities who may benefit from accessibility features?

Consistency is key - knowing your standards and how your institution is going to meet them is critical to the student experience.

Resources

- Blog posts:
 - From Cyndi Rowland: [Steps you can take now to address accessibility at your institution & The Role of Accessibility in Procurement](#)
 - From Kelly Hermann: [Accessibility in Procurement and Partnership between vendors & institutions](#)
- [YouTube Caption help](#)
- [Captions, Transcripts and Audio Description from WebAIM](#)
- [WebAIM alternative text guidance](#)
- Create accessible documents: [MS Office document accessibility](#) and [Accessible PDFs from Adobe](#). Use built in styles and templates, especially in MS Office documents.
- Share descriptive hyperlinks instead of long web addresses (see examples above and more information on [WebAIM's link page](#)).
- Do not use color as the only means of conveying meaning and make sure there is sufficient color contrast ([WebAIM's color contrast checker](#)).



Contact us with questions

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Session Evaluation

- [Link to Session Evaluation Form](https://tinyurl.com/AHEAD2020-SessionEval)
tinyurl.com/AHEAD2020-SessionEval
- Your feedback helps shape future programming.
- Thank you for attending!