# What Fit and Flopped: Reflections of Accessibility Initiatives

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Higher Education institutions offer numerous opportunities to innovate, develop new programs, and experiment with initiatives. In this presentation, as accessibility experts, we will discuss the adoption of assistive technology tools, training of faculty and staff on best practices in electronic authoring, and even contests aimed at improving educational materials. Our focus will be on sharing our experience of successful accessibility initiatives implemented at Florida SouthWestern State College and the University of Central Florida, as well as the ones that did not quite work out. We will discuss what worked and what did not, and encourage participants to share their own institution's accessibility initiatives to facilitate networking and idea sharing. The shared initiatives will be collected and made available to provide feedback and inspire other institutions to implement them for their own communities.

## Key Points

* Limited stakeholder buy-in can hinder accessibility initiatives.
* Ongoing networking and education are vital for accessibility knowledge.
* Keep brainstorming until you find the right initiative for your organization's needs.

## Agenda

* Steven’s Initiatives that Fit & Flopped
* Kevin’s Initiatives that Fit & Flopped
* Collaboration Time to Share Your Initiatives

## Steven’s Initiatives that Fit & Flopped

* Weekly Accessibility Tips included within Student and Faculty/Staff email blasts.
* Professional Development:
  + Weekly “Accessibility Tech Tuesday” training sessions.
  + New Faculty/Adjunct Seminars.
  + Individualized 1-hour training sessions.
  + Online Design Certification (DEV101) – Universal Design and Access.
* Student training workshop opportunities.
* Visible accessibility scanning within the LMS.
* Providing Accessibility Goals for Unit Planning.
* Impact campaigns

## Steven, What Flopped?

* + Weekly “Accessibility Tech Tuesday” training sessions.
  + Weekly Accessibility Tips included within Student and Faculty/Staff email blasts.
  + Student training workshop opportunities.
  + Individualized 1-hour professional development training sessions.
  + Impact campaign.

## Steven, So, What Fit?

There is no magic solution, each initiative has strengths and weaknesses.

* Professional Development:
* New Faculty/Adjunct Seminars
  + Online Design Certification (DEV101) – Universal Design and Access
  + Visible accessibility scanning results within the LMS.
* Providing Accessibility Goals for Unit Planning.

## Kevin’s Initiatives that Fit & Flopped

* Policy Implementation
* Training of Accessibility
* Administrative Support
* Hiring Accessibility Evangelist
* Providing Tools on Accessibility

## Kevin, So, What Fit?

* Policy with clear mandates, Consequences, Timelines, and ongoing committee to support. Updating policy on a regular basis.
* Leadership actively engaged with process and supporting time used towards accessibility.
* Outreach with the needs of audience in mind.
* Providing resources when infrastructure including training/policy is ready.
* Use standard tools for accessibility with existing software.
* Online trainings that can be accessed at user's convenience.
* Making sure accessibility language is in the procurement process.
* Recognizing the accessibility champions and providing continuous support for them.

## Kevin, What flopped?

* Trainings had low attendance due to audience understanding and needs.
* Lack of involvement in policy implementation by a key stakeholder.
* No clear policy baselines to document a goal was completed.
* Not factoring in turnover of employees and training of new employees.
* Lack of consequences for non-compliance.
* No plan for change as accessibility standards change and new technologies are implemented.
* Taking vendor's word regarding VPAT Accessibility.

## Each Initiative is a Learning Lesson

There are never true failures, creativity is essential.

## Fitting Factors

1. Strong endorsement from senior leadership.
2. Effective change management and succession planning.
   1. Adequate promotion and funding.
   2. Advocates for technology adoption.
   3. Integration of accessibility into job descriptions for talent acquisition.
3. Availability of resources to provide training/tools.
4. Recognition of accessibility as an ongoing commitment.
5. Impact on institutional culture.

## Flopping Factors

1. No Plan of Action
   1. Not Highly Prioritized
   2. Unrealistic Expectations
   3. Low Technology Skills
2. Turnover
3. Decentralized Systems
4. The “Lack ofs…”
   1. Lack of Funding
   2. Lack of Communication
   3. Lack of Support
   4. Lack of Faculty or Staff Buy-in
   5. Lack of Interest or Appeal
   6. Lack of Consequence

## Let’s Collaborate!

Please take the next 10 minutes to team up with a partner or two. Put together a quick list of some successful accessibility initiatives for your institutions.

[Access the Shared Google Sheet to Contribute.](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1au8HojKfpTpaKjj8Jub-u65XSA9Eegnh9wI8lXggbl8/edit#gid=0)

## Thank You!

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