Playing the Long Game: Building an A11y Outreach Ecosystem to Increase Faculty Engagement

Accessing Higher Ground 2024

## Agenda

Part 1: Accessibility (A11y) at the University of Washington

* Past
* Present
* Future
* Observations and Lessons Learned from a Year of Outreach

Part 2: The Long Game – Creating “Multiple Means” for Engagement

* The usual tools weren’t enough
* Understanding our target audience – personal and professional constraints, institutional barriers

Part 3: The Outreach Ecosystem

* Walking the Walk: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) & a11y outreach
* The Outreach Ecosystem
* Two Pilot Projects
* Where do

##

## Part 1: Digital A11y at the University of Washington

### Invitation to Share Resources

We’re all in this together! Please look at the shared doc link we will share & add new organizations to our list of resources. Here are a few:

* ATHEN
* AHEAD
* EDUCAUSE IT Accessibility Community Group
* Big Ten Academic Alliance
* TeachAccess
* The White House Office of Science and Technology (OSTP)

### Observations: A Year of Outreach

Networking with stakeholders and conversations with faculty at all levels revealed 5 key gaps we need to bridge (or at least acknowledge) when working with faculty:

1. Language Gap
2. Awareness Gap
3. Knowledge Gap
4. Resource Gap
5. Community Gap

### Reflection 1

Think about your institution

* Does your institution have similar gaps?
* How do gaps create challenges for your faculty outreach efforts?
* How have you begun to bridge such gaps?

## Part 2: The Long Game

### Existing Outreach Tools

Helpful, but not enough. Needed options that offered more return on the time investment for both me and the faculty. Options that are:

* Efficient
* Replicable
* Sustainable
* Interactive – and “sticky.” Offer ways for faculty to achieve something.

### Understanding Target Audience

* Personal Constraints
* Professional Constraints
* Permanent Structural Barriers

### Reflection 2

We often talk about needing to achieve “buy-in” from faculty when it comes to accessibility.

* How might an awareness of professional and personal constraints for faculty help us in our messaging to them?
* How might an awareness of structural barriers, like the promotion structure or academic time warp help us in our messaging?

## Part 3: The Path Forward (a work that will always be in progress)

### What is Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?

**For the classroom**

“The design of course materials, classroom interactions, and environments to be usable by all students, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

* + A design methodology

**Adapted for the Outreach Ecosystem**

“The design of accessibility training, workshop interactions, and engagement environments to be usable by all instructors, to the greatest extent possible, within an overburdened time schedule, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

* + A design methodology

### Three Pillars of UDL

1. **Multiple Means of Representation:** Offer more than one format for learners to access learning goals, course materials, activities, and information.
2. **Multiple Means of Engagement:** Offer choices, when possible, on how learners interact with material and participate in activities.
3. **Multiple Means of Action and Expression:** Offer a variety of assessment types that allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that don’t disadvantage them.

### The Outreach Ecosystem

Center **Mutiple Ways to Engage** within a variety of options and resources so faculty can find opportunities that suit their learning style, bandwidth, timeframe, and ability.

* Technical Support – including remediation, help desk queries, resources
* Networking and Connection
* Accessibility Instruction Meetups and other community events – e.g., one department has a quarterly Disability Community Mixer open to all)
* Workshops and Presentations – customizable, varied in length and venue
* Training platforms for online, asynchronous, individual learning
* 1:1 and small team consults

### An Ecosystem Mindset

* Focuses on multiple ways for faculty to access and interact with training and resources on Accessibility.
* Acknowledges the diversity of our faculty learners and their different ways of developing a workflow.
* Helps us to anticipate and proactively design for learners’ needs, particularly with overburdened schedules.
* Helps us build both accessibility awareness and technical skills.
* Helps us address the personal and institutional constraints faced by faculty

## Two Pilot Projects

1. Accessibility Cafe Model
2. Accessibility POP Working Groups

### Accessibility Cafe Model

90-minute guided session on a single accesssibilty topic/skill

* 20-30 min. Presentation – introduction to topic
* 60-70 min. Open Work Time – attendees practice skills on own content, talk, ask quesitions

### Accessibility POP Working Group

POP is an acronym for Progres Over Perfection

* Peer-based group with facilitator, modeled on [Writing Accountability Groups (WAG)](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/faculty-development/career-path/wags) , a model many faculty are familiar with.
* Meet once a week for an hour
	+ 15-min. -- Round robin check in on accessibility goals set for previous week
	+ 30-min. -- Individual working time (or ask questions of facilitator)
	+ 15-min. -- Round robin check out: What are your goals for next week

## Where do I start?

Networking & Building Partnerships

Networking and Building Partnerships shifts the dynamic and helps faculty see engagement as a partnership rather than an adversarial relationship. And ou may be surprised to learn that there are hidden pockets of accessibility work happening throughout campus, but people haven’t known how to connect with one another.

#### Task 1:

List three people/departments/committees you might reach out to after AHG

#### Task 2:

Look up their websites –

* News – what are recent accomplishments, who are new hires?
* Sign up for notifications to their event calendars – attend some events

#### Task 3:

Look up your Center for Teaching and Learning (or equivalent)

* Get to know the staff and their resources – they are a natural collaboration partner
* Attend their events and webinars – participate so attendees become familiar with you

#### Task 4:

Build Partnerships

* Learn who the office manager or administrator is in one or two academic units and ask them to share contact information for faculty or TAs working on inclusive teaching or DEI or accessibility committees.
* Reach out and offer to do a 101-type of accessibility presentation for their team.
* Even if they can’t schedule it, this offer opens the door for future conversations and possible collaborations.
* Be open to customizing for their target audience and concerns

## Sticking Points

Think about where/when in the course students consistently…

* Ask the same questions every time you teach it
* Get the same things wrong on quizzes and tests
* Ask for alternative explanations or instructions
* Say that they are unaware of policies or resources that you have shown them

## Think-Pair-Share: Sticking Points

**Think** (~3 min.)

Reflect on a current or upcoming course and think about patterns. Can you list 2-3 sticking points that come to mind?

**Pair** (~5-6 min.)

Share with your partner the sticking points that you’ve listed. Similarities?

**Share** (~5-6 min.)

Brief sharing with the group. What do we have in common?

## Reflection 3

Reflect on a current or upcoming course and think about patterns.

* Can you list 2-3 success points that come to mind?
* Are there aspects from a success point that you can integrate into mitigating a sticking point? Take a moment to take some notes you can refer to later.

## Reflection 4

Gathering thoughts and questions

* Write a short bullet list of impressions of what we’ve covered so far or ideas that are coming to mind for your course(s)
* Write down any questions that are coming to mind.

## Think-Pair-Share: Day 1-Week 1

\*This topic came up in the SPH Accessibility Café on Canvas Accessibility in February.

**Think** (~3 min.)

Can you list 2-3 early-quarter challenges that create sticking points later on? *Example: Many student don’t read the syllabus.*

**Pair** (~5-6 min.)

Share with your partner the sticking points that you’ve listed. Similarities?

**Share** (~5-6 min.)

Brief sharing with the group. What are some +1s we can apply?

## Benefits of UDL

* Refreshes our creativity when we design our course materials
* Reveals that Incremental changes have big returns
* Models for students that we are invested in their experience
* Benefits all learners, regardless of disability status
* Engages different ways of learning
* Keeps accessibility and inclusion top-of-mind

## Reflection 5

Looking ahead

* Write a short bullet list of ideas/examples that have most intrigued you or caused an “ah ha!” moment for you.
* What is **one small thing** that you can commit to implementing in a course you’re teaching summer or fall quarter using UDL principles?

### **Invitation: Seeking UW Faculty Participants for a Summer Accessibility Pilot!**

The universal challenge that faces everyone who is working to strengthen accessibility of course materials and other content is TIME. Where do we find the time to do this work? Where do we find the time to learn and apply new accessibility skills?

The Accessibility POP Working Group is a pilot project to try to address this challenge. POP is the acronym for Progress Over Perfection, the idea that steady, incremental progress is how we address the persistent challenge of time.

### **What?**

The Accessibility POP Working Group pilot project is inspired by the tradition of academic Writing Accountability Groups (WAGS). WAGS are peer-based writing groups that meet once a week to help their members establish and maintain sustainable writing and research practices amid busy schedules. By sharing successes and challenges in meeting goals, members build community and support. Outside of the weekly meetings, WAG members have no commitment to the group itself, only to themselves and their writing goals.

Instead of focusing on writing/research, the Accessibility POP Working Group will focus on helping participants set incremental, sustainable goals for strengthening accessibility of their content, regardless of what it is.

### **Overview of the project**

* Seeking 6-10 summer faculty or support staff who can commit to attending one 1-hour Zoom meeting per week during Summer Quarter 2024.
* Ten meetings will be held between June 17 and August 20. Participants are asked to commit to attending a minimum of 8 meetings.
* Meetings will be working meetings. Participants will have time to work on their own materials in a supportive, collegial environment with peers.
* Outside of meeting times, participants will work on their own tasks and goals at their own pace. The only parameters are those participants choose for themselves, so there is a lot of freedom in how you want to operate.
* This project is being organized and facilitated by Mary-Colleen Jenkins, Instruction Accessibility Specialist with [UW Accessible Technology Services](https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/) (ATS)

### **Who can participate?**

* Faculty, instructors, lecturers, TAs – anyone who teaches within the UW system, including part-time and adjunct faculty. Must have a current UW netid.
* Instructional support staff are also welcome, as is anyone who wants to establish an accessibility practice for their UW content.

### **Curious? Come to the Information Session!**

Thursday, May 30, from 3:00-3:45 pm on Zoom. Complete the [registration form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd-aCY0VrM4FG1cdf0fsYoN11y3EYqLfzkesvOcvcOVnF7jMg/viewform?usp=sf_link) to receive a Zoom invite prior to the event.