

ORAHEAD Spring 2021 Conference

The need is great: preventing a return to campus from being a return to the status quo

April 23, 2021 - Session prepared by Kaela Parks, Portland Community College

Topics we'll explore:

- Why should we resist a return to the status quo?
- What would Deep Accessibility look like?
- A review of topics - with initial framing.
- Acknowledgement - We are not going to solve all the problems. However, there are (likely) things we can do to support colleagues in preventing a return to the status quo.

Why we should resist a return to the status quo

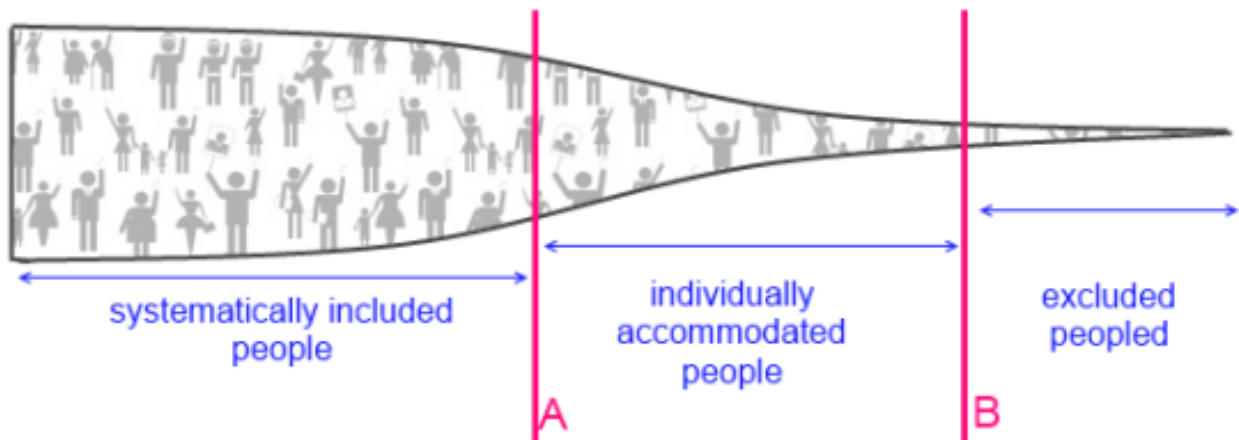
The accommodation process is meant to “Level the Playing Field” but:

- There are disparities in who has access to documentation needed for eligibility (cultural norms, socio-economic status, bias within diagnostic and evaluative processes).
- There can be a lack of transparency/interactivity in the eligibility determination process.
- Accommodation implementation can be delayed, ineffective, and laden with stigma.
- Institutions seldom evaluate the effectiveness of accommodation.

Deep Accessibility

Star Ford wrote this piece on [Deep Accessibility](#) that I find really compelling. There is a graphic at the top that represents how a given population might be divided up in terms of access. It is like a funnel on it's side, and on the wide end, there is a group of people who are systematically included, these are folks who have access to education without the need for any adjustment. The system is built for them. The next group of people is smaller, and contains those who are accommodated. The last group of folks is the smallest, and consists of those who are excluded.

<https://tinyurl.com/preventstatusquo>



There are vertical lines on the drawing that could be shifted left or right to make each of these groups larger or smaller, and the idea is that if we want more people to be included, we should make systematic access work for as many as possible. From there, the piece goes on to describe and discuss the ways barriers can occur at each of five levels.

- Movement** (getting there)
 This level is about ADA standards in the built environment, and about WCAG in the digital environment. It is about access in terms of ability to gain entry.
- Sense** (what it's like once we're there)
 This level is about the sights, sounds, and smells, and what it feels like to be there once we have gotten into the course or program or event.
- Architecture** (how we orient ourselves)
 This level is about wayfinding, and navigational cues. It is about the layout of the course shell and the syllabus.
- Communication** (how we understand and are understood)
 This level is about the language we use and the pace at which we use it. It is also about whose voices are centered and the degree to which agendas are available in advance.
- Agency** (who defines our identity and engagement)
 This level is about the degree to which we get to decide how our roles are defined and what kinds of engagement are valid.

Discussion Prompt related Accommodation and Deep Accessibility

Is accommodation more effective in addressing barriers at some levels vs others?

Examples of Topics

Topic	Traditional approach	What is different now	What it could mean
Faculty experience with remote teaching tech	Many instructors teaching face to face courses did not use educational technology to support flexible participation	With remote instruction, many faculty gained more exposure and practice with remote teaching technologies.	More instructors in face to face courses allow online options for participation
Diversity in work needs	Employees and students typically told how, where, and when to engage in work activities without individualized approach (on-site default)	Some have thrived in remote, and some have not - there is authentic diversity in goodness of fit (for the activity and the person)	More individualized approaches to determining how and when employees and students engage
Communication	Accommodation based and ad hoc approaches to interpretation and translation	Increased demand for captioning, gaps for ESOL students, overwhelming volume of dense emails	Communication access strategy that addresses IT/AV infrastructure and authoring approach
Mental Health	Viewed as the purview of Counseling, DS, CARE, BIT, Conduct, Res Life, etc	Overwhelming evidence of mental health impacts	Trauma informed approaches across and throughout
Notetaking approaches	Individual students are provided support in form of peer notes, access to recorders, liverscribes, etc.	More sessions are recorded and made available to all as part of remote delivery	As more classes are offered on-site, recordings continue to be shared
Absences	Possible for some leeway, but often students are encouraged to withdraw, or are assigned a lower grade if they are not able to be physically present	Greater flexibility encouraged to ensure retention and enrollment during pandemic that impacted ability to participate	More discerning judgments about when physical participation is actually required
Testing	Heavy use of timed tests in proctored environments with accommodated testing often in small rooms with cameras to monitor	Remote proctoring and academic integrity concerns	Grading equity and use of more flexible assessments

Acknowledgement - we can't do it alone

We are not going to solve all the problems. However, there are (likely) things we can do to support colleagues in preventing a return to the status quo.

- Making space for student voice
- Confirming limits of accommodation and consulting/promoting Inclusion and UD
- Developing collaborations that ensure accountability for sustained change

Discussion Prompts related to Topics and Acknowledgement

- How can you use your position to support constructive change?
- What are you most worried about with the return to on-site operations?
- Are you having conversations at your institution that are focused on increasing inclusion? If so, do any of these topics resonate, and what kinds of partnerships are you finding most productive?

Resources

There are a TON of excellent resources - let's build this list out with our favorites, and share!

Disability Resources, Toolkits, and Texts

[Academic Ableism](#) & [Related Resources](#)

[Deep Accessibility](#), [Accessible Syllabus](#) & [Refocus Toolkit](#)

Articles from Inside Higher Ed that have sparked debate

- [HyFlex Models](#) - technology infrastructure and faculty support are essential
- [Proof of Concept](#) - will colleges maintain flexibility
- [Mental Health](#) - talking about mental health, racism, disparate impacts on populations, & students having active voice - as well as Original piece from [Mental Health America](#)

Research and Policy Guidance

[Evaluating Flexible and Hybrid](#) - chapter from EdTech text that highlights several studies

[Higher Education's Next Great Challenge](#) - Report from the Institute for Educational Leadership

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