

*Making a class inclusive can mean one thing in person and something entirely different at a distance. Accessibility is the foundational framework from which to instruct.*

## ACCESSIBILITY VERSUS ACCOMMODATION

UITL recognizes how the shift to remote teaching can interrupt an instructor's inclusive strategies. Below are some foundational points to keep in mind.

Instructors who move to teaching remotely or fully online should think through the Disability Studies framework of accessibility versus accommodation.

Accommodation makes exceptions for individuals on a case-by-case basis; accessibility refers to crafting, from the beginning, instructional models for as many as possible, so that no one needs to seek an exception.

Disability and law scholar Katie Rose Guest Pryal explains, "If a space is accessible, that space is always, 100% of the time, welcoming to people with disabilities. People with disabilities do not have to ask for anything. They do not have to prove they have disabilities. They do not have to interact with gatekeepers. *They can simply be.*"

Applying the lens of accommodation creates the space for instructors to focus on **giving students options, teaching with transparency, and sharing resources.**

---

Guest Pryal, K.R. (Sept. 8, 2019). Accessibility v. Accommodation (Part 1). [katirosequestpryal.com/2016/04/04/accessibility-v-accommodation-part-1/#more-2475](https://katirosequestpryal.com/2016/04/04/accessibility-v-accommodation-part-1/#more-2475).

## GIVING STUDENTS OPTIONS

Providing a variety of options and opportunities for students to engage with course content and materials, their instructor and one another allows them to select a path that best fits their skills, schedule, and familiarity with digital tools.

Instead of requesting an accommodation, students can select a method for achieving a given learning outcome.

Flexible assessments and due dates are one way of providing options.

Digital learning spaces also allow for flexibility related to student participation. During a Zoom class session, for example, an instructor can encourage students to participate orally during a remote session but also via Zoom chat. Students might also be encouraged to share ideas anonymously (making the contribution low stakes and limiting fear of failure) on a Google doc.

Stenman and Pettersson (2020) explain that a switch to remote teaching can actually offer more opportunities for some students to participate: "Remote teaching is also described as a possible solution for those pupils who disappear and become silent in traditional classroom environments. They may dare to speak up and be heard when the communication is more digitally organized."

---

Stenman, S. & Pettersson, F. (2020). Remote teaching for equal and inclusive education in rural areas? An analysis of teachers' perspectives on remote teaching. *The International Journal of Information and Learning Technology*. ahead-of-print. 10.1108/IJILT-10-2019-0096.

## TEACHING WITH TRANSPARENCY

Transparency means clearly communicating with students about course norms, values, and expectations. It begins with a syllabus, should be present in course design, and is articulated and reinforced in all course activities.

Being transparent aids students with metacognition and successful learning in a course; it also supports students across various positions and identities (Winkelmes 2016).

Transparency avoids transmittal of a hidden curriculum: a set lessons learned that are not intended or lessons learned that are not formally addressed. Hidden curriculum might teach etiquette for class discussion, convey expectations for participation in office hours, and assume students know how to access support for the course. Unintended lessons might be an acceptance of hierarchy in some fields of study or highly competitive contexts in others.

---

## Remote Teaching: Sustaining Inclusivity and Accessibility

Students unfamiliar with the hidden curriculum -- international students, first-generation learners, etc. -- are at a disadvantage without transparency. Additionally, students may feel less likely to engage and investigate class norms in a new digital setting if they are part of an underrepresented identity group.

Instructors transform hidden curriculum into transparent learning by being clear and precise with students about interactions, goals, and expectations. Instructors should be transparent with students about the changes made during the switch to remote teaching, which may include adaptations to course norms and structures. Discussions and documentation of changes are worth the investment of time.

Winkelmes and colleagues found that “[p]roviding greater transparency about academic work on two assignments resulted in significant benefits for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, who experienced increases in areas that are established predictors of student success: their academic confidence, sense of belonging, and awareness of their improved mastery of the skills employers value most when hiring.”

---

Winkelmes, M., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, M., and Golanics, J. (2016). “A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students’ success.” *Association of American Colleges & Universities. Peer Review* (18)2. <https://www.aacu.org/peerreview/2016/winter-spring/Winkelmes>

---

### SHARING RESOURCES

Students may be facing additional barriers to learning as a result of face-to-face instruction disruption. While class is no longer meeting in-person that doesn’t mean students have more free time to focus on course content.

They may have uneven access to technology and new obligations. Students may also be sharing technology with others in their household, be sick and/or caring for others around them, be parenting or struggling to make ends meet.

With the escalated isolation at home, the occurrence of

intimate partner violence also escalates for some of our students. Those who experience homelessness and/or food insecurity or are undocu/DACA-mented also face significant challenges.

Instead of waiting for students to reach out with a dilemma (accommodation), instructors can post a list of resources or link to existing Ohio State resources on Carmen pages and make students aware of them (access).

---

These are some that have been shared by instructors:

Buckeye Food Alliance (food pantry): Lincoln Tower, Suite 150, 1800 Cannon Drive, Columbus, OH, 43210, (614) 688-2508. Hours available here: <https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/home-vision-campaigns>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: Advocates are available to talk in more than 200 languages, 1-800-799-7233; 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) <https://www.thehotline.org/help/>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of people/families, so they can purchase healthy foods.

RAINN: The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network is United States’ largest anti-sexual violence organization, providing safety and prevention resources and guides as well as operating the Department of Defense Safe Helpline.

United We Dream: The organization empowers people to develop their leadership, their organizing skills, and to develop their own campaigns to fight for justice and dignity for immigrants and all people.

Nationalhomeless.org: National network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers and others who are committed to ending homelessness. Provides resources for those experiencing homelessness, as well as teaching about people experiencing homelessness.

