

ACCESSIBLE LEARNING = GOOD
TEACHING

NOT JUST COMPLIANCE

THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT TODAY

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Various state laws
- Other federal guidance – Department of Justice and Office of Civil Rights Dear Colleague letter regarding ebook readers

COMPLIANCE IS...

- Adhering to the laws and regulations, at both state and federal levels
- Kind of a dirty word – implies that we are forced to make certain provisions and assumes that there is no choice involved
- Sets the floor – the minimum we may need to do – but does not guarantee that everything is accessible
- Tricks us into believing that adhering to the regulations means the student will have everything they need

ACCESSIBILITY IS...

- Ensuring that students with disabilities can access the material used in your course/study/learning opportunity;
- Allowing for multiple means of presenting information;
- Not relying on one sense to convey information or meaning;
- Planning ahead for a student's need for assistive technology;
- Adhering to accepted standards of technological accessibility to meet our legal requirements.

WHO NEEDS ACCESSIBILITY?

- A student with a disability can have any diagnosed medical, psychological or learning condition can lead to an inability to use course materials or the computer, or to interact with others in standard ways.
- Most frequently, online accessibility is associated with those students who have sensory impairments and have difficulty seeing or hearing but other students with disabilities have needs as well.

ACCESSIBILITY VS. ACCOMMODATIONS

- We could rephrase this as Proactive vs. Reactive.
- Accessibility is something we think about and build into our activities BEFORE a term begins and a student requests accommodations.
- Making our courses/studies and learning opportunities accessible means we know that these components may be an issue and we are ensuring that a student has access from the moment he/she interacts with the course.

ACCOMMODATIONS...

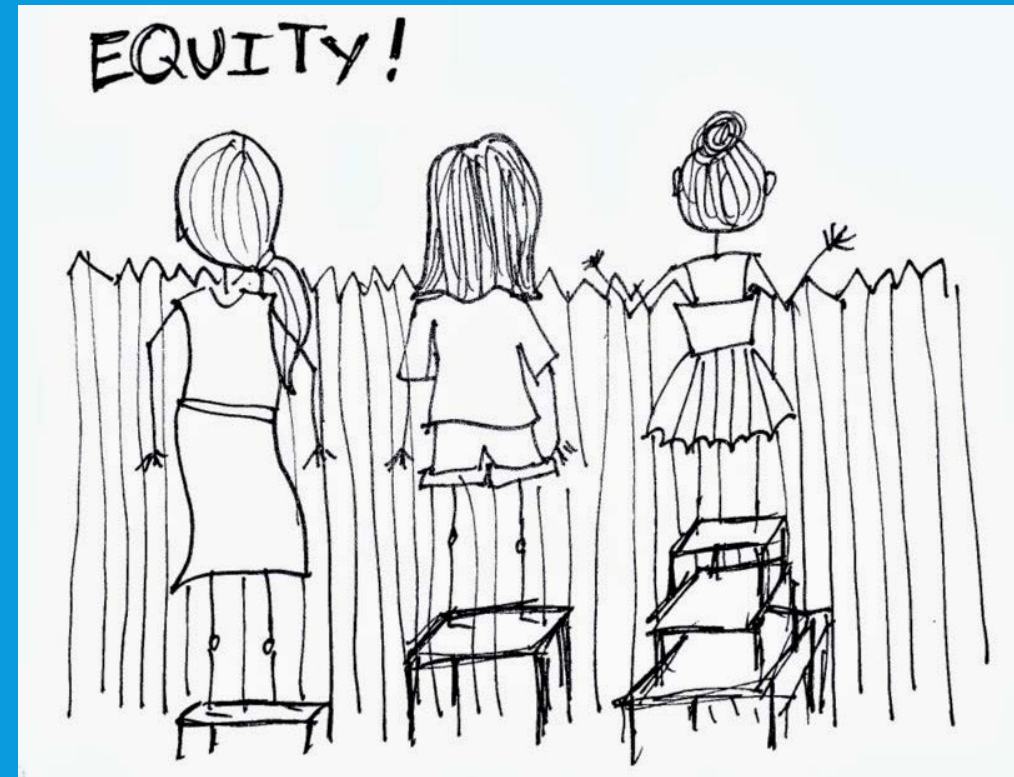
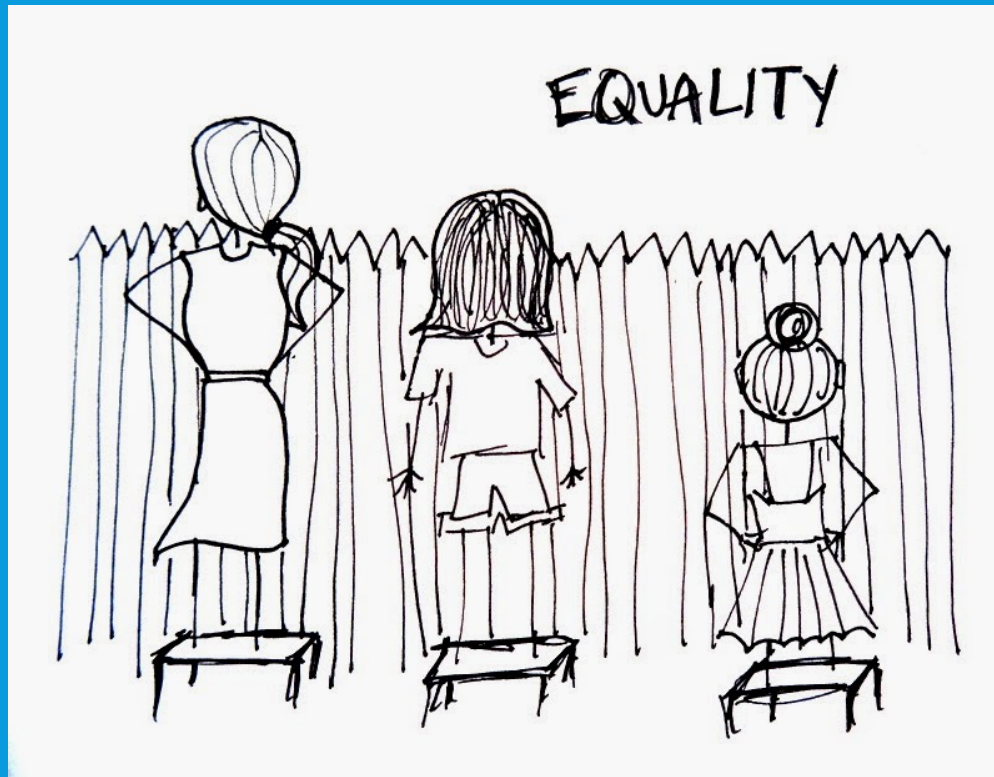
- Are modifications made based on individual student need and request;
- Are often not measures that we can put in place for the entire course/study and its students;
 - For example, a student who needs to have extended time on an online test will need to have a separate setting to grant the extra time.
- Are designed to account for those aspects of the course that cannot be designed in a different way to allow for accessibility.

WHY DO WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY?

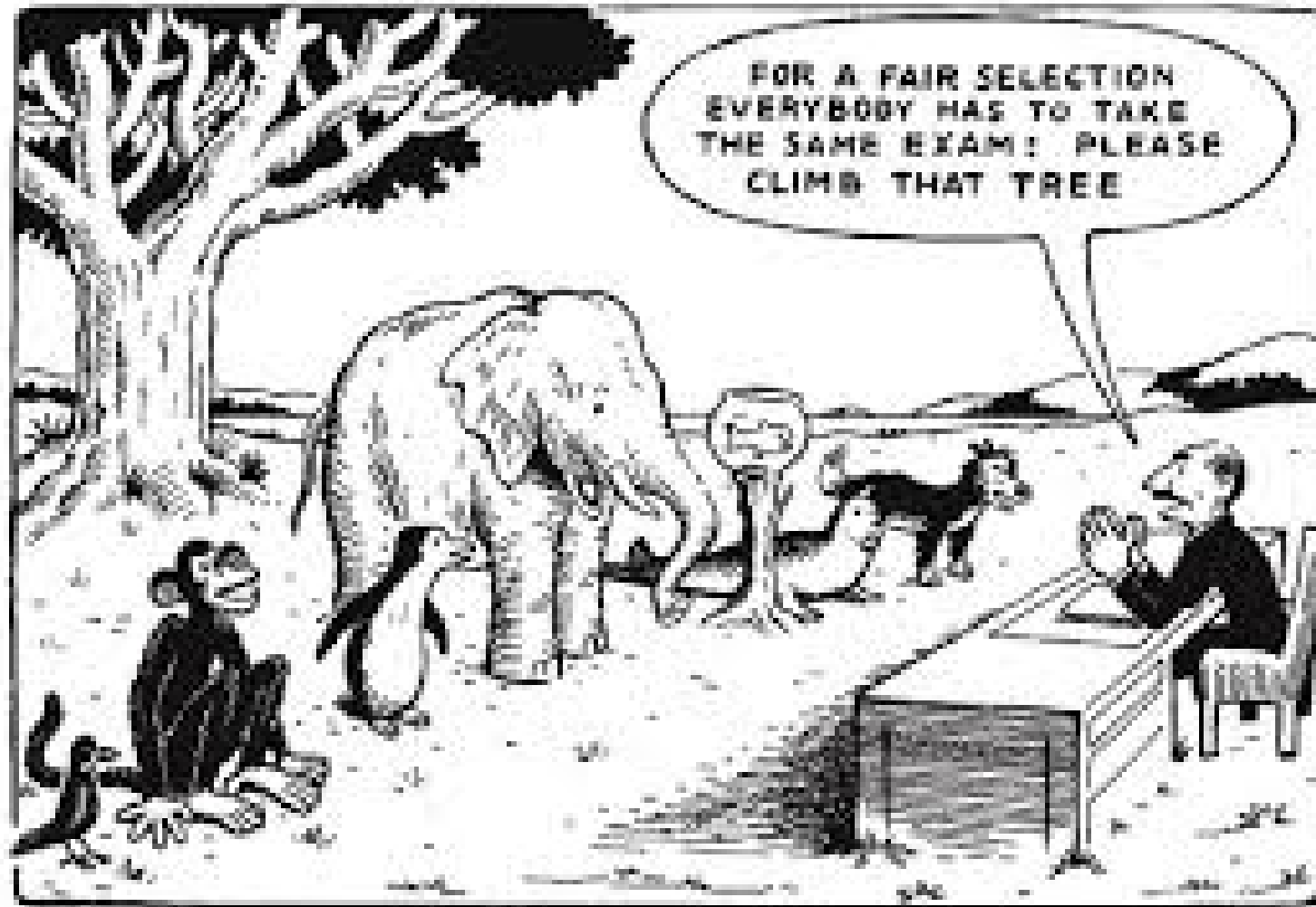
- Yes, the law and our legal responsibilities are a big part of why we need to be concerned about accessibility, BUT...

We need to be concerned with accessibility because we want our students to learn. If we have something to say to our students, doesn't that mean that we think it is important? If yes (and I think we all agree with answering "yes" to this), then it is important for ALL of our students to have access to it, not just the ones without disabilities.

EQUALITY VS EQUITY



ONE MORE...



UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- Architectural concept used to make environments more usable by all
- Adapted to learning in multiple ways – universal design for learning, universal design for instruction
- Offers benefit to all users, not just those with disabilities



7 PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

1. Equitable use – identical when possible, equivalent when not, avoiding the segregation of users, appealing design
2. Flexibility in use – offer choice, adapt to user's pace, facilitate accuracy
3. Simple and intuitive use – avoid unnecessary complication in word choice, consistency, organize information according to importance
4. Perceptible information – utilizing different modes for presentation of information, contrast, captions
5. Tolerance for error – organize so most used features are easily accessed, warnings
6. Low physical effort – minimizing repetitive actions and those requiring sustained physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use – clear line of sight, spacing around items

UD IN ONLINE COURSES

- Module at a Glance or other organizing page for each section of a course;
- Timer for editing a discussion forum post;
- Providing multiple formats of the same information and allowing choice – article, video, podcast, etc.;
- Ensuring that all videos are captioned and transcripts are provided for all audio components – yes, this is an aspect of compliance but it is UD for those students who speak English as a second language or those students trying to complete their work at night after their families have gone to bed, etc.;
- Organization of content to match screen size – reduce the need for scrolling and then clicking to get through text;
- Thinking through components of assignments – not only how to build in choice but also what senses are required to complete the assignment?

SO, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

- Bring together your team – who on your campus has a vested interest in accessibility?
- Decide on a standard for online accessibility – WCAG 2.0 AA has been identified by the Department of Justice in most recent comment period for web accessibility rules.
- Evaluate your learning resources – think about how someone who cannot see or hear, or who has difficulty processing information may experience the learning activity you are choosing to use. What information might they miss?
- Communicate to your campus – demonstrate the institutional commitment to accessibility.
- Provide professional development opportunities – how can we all grow together to ensure our students have an equitable learning opportunity?

BREAK OUT QUESTIONS

Designing & developing the course

What strategies and resources are available to build accessibility into course design?

Teaching the course

How do we account for individual differences and the need for accommodations when delivering a course?