Beyond the AODA: Teaching Accessibility Literacy to (Future) Information Professionals
Hello!

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Today’s agenda

- Print disabilities and librarianship
- Conceptualizing an accessibility workshop
- Empathy-forward learning
- Workshop structure and outcomes
What is a print disability?
Let's start with the basics
A print disability is a learning, physical or visual disability that prevents a person from reading conventional print.

-Centre for Equitable Library Access
Equitable access is one of the core values of librarianship.
Accessibility in a library context

- Communication
- Procurement
- Administration
2 Origin of our workshop
I knew very little about accessible librarianship which was a problem because accessibility barriers impact real people and I care about equitable information access!
Accessibility, as taught in LIS-stream classes

- As a core value of the field
- As a legal obligation
- As a routine operational concern
Developing the **workshop**

- Integrate into existing workshop series
- Partner with UTL expert

**Ultimate Goal:**
Create a workshop so compelling that students are moved to want to learn more
Empathy
Consensus that empathy promotes:
- problem-solving skills
- open-mindedness
- flexibility
- higher GPAs

Consensus that empathy discourages:
- superficial problem examination
- belief rigidity
Using empathy as a learning tool during a particular lesson makes that lesson **more resonant**.
Workshop structure

Integrating an empathy-forward approach into a skills-based workshop
Create an accessible PDF

Key takeaways:
- Electronic documents are not *de facto* accessible
- Content creators can easily design accessible materials
Navigate UTL website with a screen reader

Key takeaways:
- Navigating websites with assistive tech requires unique skill sets
- Even accessible websites can pose challenges to users
Explore accessibility tools readily available to most people

Key takeaway:
- Most individuals already have powerful assistive tech at their disposal – and they should use it!
Workshop outcomes
At workshop’s end, students reported

- appreciation for practical instruction
  noted relevance to current jobs and perceived relevance to future employment

- impact of empathy-forward approach
  “experiencing first-hand helped me gain a new appreciation for why accessibility is important”

- intention to learn more
  asked for further readings and more accessibility workshops; signed up for tour of ACE
Conclusion

Our key takeaways
Looking to provide accessibility training to your peers or students?

- Instruction should involve a practical component
- It doesn’t have to be comprehensive to be impactful
- Leveraging empathy promotes participant learning in and beyond the classroom
Thanks!

Any questions?

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