

Designing for the Edges of Online Learning: An institutional journey toward authentic accessibility

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How do we move away from accommodation within our systems of learning to “authentic accessibility”?

Levin, J. (2007). *Nontraditional students and community colleges: The conflict of justice and neoliberalism*. Springer.

Lee, K. (2017). Rethinking the accessibility of online higher education: A historical review. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 33, 15-23.

Institutional Context 2017

- Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)
- Office of Rights & Responsibilities, Ombudsperson
- Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning → Vice-Provost, Innovation in T&L
- Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations
- Indigenous Directions Leadership Group

- eAccess project submitted

eAccess: Expanding Accessibility in our Digital Learning Environments for Post-Secondary students

- Consortium of 3 universities, 2 colleges, 1 accessibility research network
- 4 pillars:
 - Audit of digital learning environments
 - Compliance tool(s)
 - Learning modules for faculty
 - Knowledge Exchange

from 'negligence' to 'compliance'

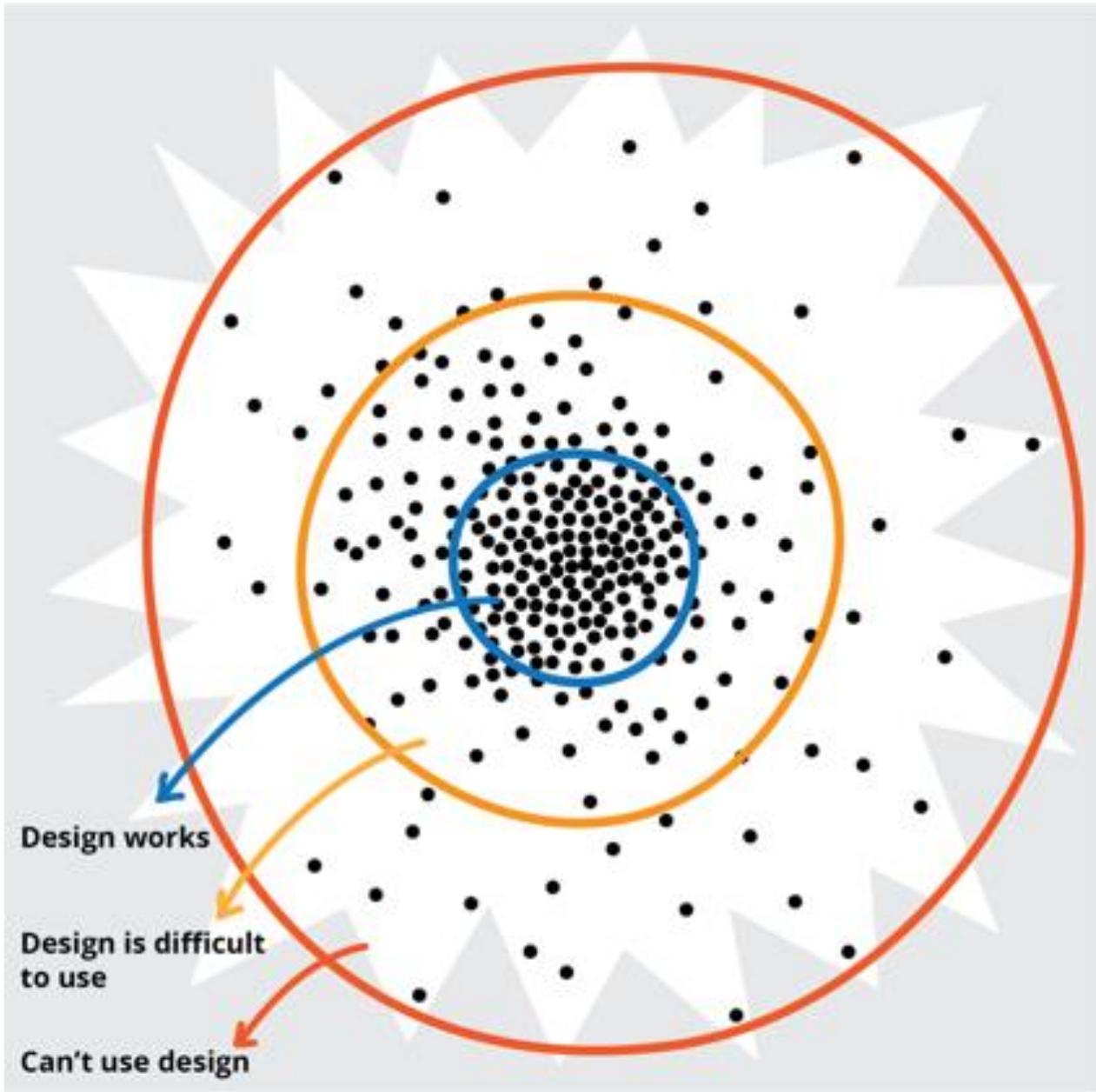
Institutional Context 2019

- ACSD + CTL
- Indigenous Directions Action Plan
 - decolonize our campus, indigenize our curricula
 - land-based pedagogies
- VP, Faculty Relations → VP, Faculty Development & Inclusion
- Campus-wide initiative regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - 2020: review of Accessibility policies
- Digital Strategy – user-centred design model
- WCAGS 2.0 legislation (Conseil du Trésor)
- eAccess, year 1 completed

From compliance to 'authentic accessibility'

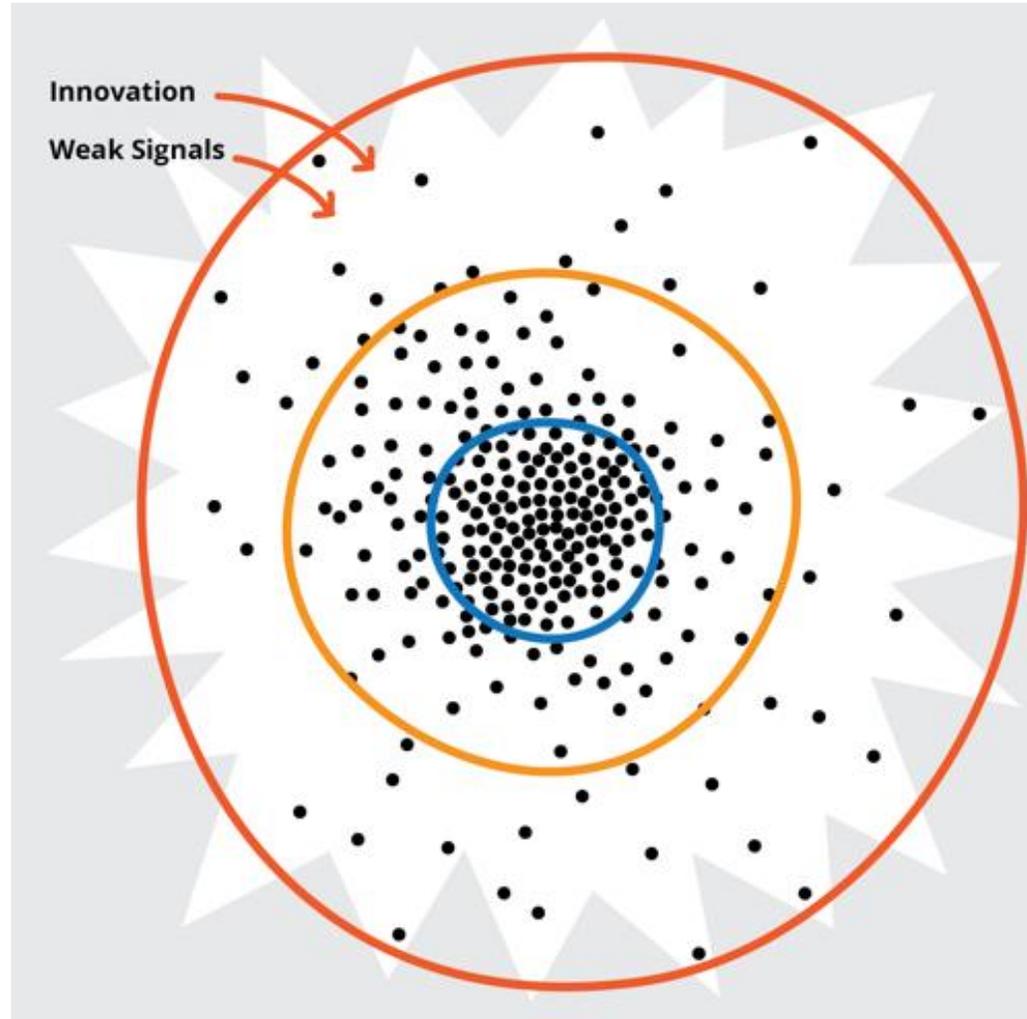
- Accommodation model
 - design for 'the middle' (norm)
 - exceptions to the norm trigger 'special treatment' protocols
- Student as deviant
- Compliance with law, regulations

Authentic accessibility emphasizes creating enabling environments that favour success for all



Jutta Treviranus, 2019
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The view from the edge



Design from the
centre:

- ↓ Flexibility
- ↓ Extensibility
- ↓ Resilience &
Responsiveness

Jutta Treviranus, 2019

Slide used with
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Designing from the edges (inclusive design)

- Design from the edges and the middle “norm” is already captured
- Social model pushes access, rather than pull (i.e., request accommodations)
- Environment continually disables students
- Unexpected accessibility emerges:
 - Students from all sorts of backgrounds benefit
- Change the terms about why we should design from the edges:

“Let’s stop talking only about the disability argument and adopt a completely different mind-set, one that doesn’t come with the negative emotional valence associated with disabilities [because of the compliance framework]”

Tobin, T. J., & Behling, K. T. (2018). *Reach everyone, teach everyone: Universal design for learning in higher education*. West Virginia University Press. p. 75.

An institutional roadmap for how to design from the edges as an institution

- User-centred
 - What are faculty needs?
 - What are student needs?
 - What resources are required?
 - Inclusive design is actually more efficient & cost-effective in the long run but requires cooperation across service units
- What are inclusive practices will best serve our campus?
 - Course recordings
 - UDL
 - Coordination across student services – medical notations, etc



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