M2 What do you do to ensure that your learning environment is accessible for all students

BRIAN BEATTY: the learning environments that we create do have to be accessible for all students very clearly what I do is I rely on our institutions learning management system which I know is designed as an accessible platform for students to use and then I use what I know about putting instructional content that's accessible in there for students documents videos etc. I do have a support unit on campus our DCRP group that can support me if I have questions or I need additional resources to caption extra videos or things like that and I have to learn how to rely on them I do rely on them all the time we have wonderful tools to help us create accessible documents you know from inaccessible versions uh pretty much automatically uh it works pretty well over you know takes maybe an hour for it to be processed so I have to learn how to use those and I and that's an important part of that the other part though is because we're doing a lot of things with students creating content you know in their activities and their perhaps their assignments etc. we should also be supporting and I try to support students in creating instructional content that's also accessible so if they're creating a word document and the intent is for it to be shared or read or reviewed with other students they should be using accessible templates as well or we're doing video presentations well if our system isn't automatically captioning or transcribing those videos then they should be they should know the tools that are available for them to use as well so it's not just me as the faculty but it's also the students when I’m thinking of students as prosumers right they're producing content as well as consuming or learning from content then I think those are two important really important aspects about accessible design

ANNELIES RAES: the hyflex course it's much more accessible because you give the choice to students so it's much more in line with it's much more in line with the individual situation of a student some students are working for some students it's more difficult to come to campus but by creating a hyflex course you make your course more accessible to a larger amount of students

GLORI HINCK: we design all of our LMS content to be as accessible as possible and we use ally by blackboard to check accessibility we work with disability resources to address any student accommodations right now we're looking really closely at the accessibility of the engagement tools that we use to identify any problem areas that would that might be present and would like to develop strategies so that faculty know exactly what accessibility limitations or might be and how to address those we need to be sure that students can intend in their modality of choice based on situational learning preferences rather just than because of technology limitations we don't want them to attend in person just because they don't have high speed internet if on zoom would be better for them

SIDNEY SHAPIRO: having the learning environment accessible is really important I record all the classes in the hyflex modules I also do small pointed focused videos that I post online in the learning management system as well and provide activities or other resources so just to give some history I started a class in programming and I uploaded the class video and it's very difficult for a student to watch a two-hour lecture when half the time of the class I was busy running around fixing people's problems talking to a whole bunch of different people and it was basically instead of a lecture productive work time it's very difficult to sit through that and there's not a lot of learning objectives inside of it that particular video would require a huge amount of editing which I didn't have time for I just wanted to upload the video so students not there would be able to participate so one of the students said to me maybe it's a better idea to record a focused 10-minute video like an overview summary this video of the class is still there but this way I could go through all the highlights so they know what to work on and so on and I did that another student asked me to do slides so I built slide deck for each module another student asked me for a podcast I still haven't done the podcast but the idea is that you're creating learning objects inside the course that appeal to different learners that work with different learning styles and ultimately help the student feel that they're part of the class now I also use textbooks in my classes and I’ve had the experience as a student of getting a gigantic textbook in the mail and saying study this book write a bunch of papers see you in 15 weeks and I want the experience of my classes to be the opposite of that that students feel like they're part of something that builds that people know who they are and even if I don't see them in person I’m connected to them and I’m actually giving them feedback so I think that that's a big part of it also trying to think about how students factor into the class and designing for asynchronous first so that everybody gets the same inclusive experience

DAVID RHOADS: in the planning stage I because I start with learning objectives I look and I go what is an excellent way to do this first asynchronously do it the best way I can think of asynchronously then I take the exact same learning objective and I go could the learning objective and the asynchronous uh assignment I go could this thing be done in a face-to-face environment this exact assignment if it can't then I go okay learn back to the learning objective and I go in the classroom what is the best way I can do it give them the best way in each modality choices that all meet the same learning objective and just know that it's not the same experience it can't be if you're at home it's different than in classroom if you're if you're virtual it's different if you're doing asynchronous at night at 12 o'clock one o'clock in the morning it's different but it is equivalent and it's equivalently excellent in the sense of you're not designing okay the ground face to face is the best usually that's what professors do is this this part's the best and then I’ll just have a second rate other options and then hopefully that'll incentivize them to come to class but you just all three modalities or two modalities in my case make them both excellent and then keep on making them better every single time you teach it

JASON CORCORAN: so in terms of accessibility I think that a lot of that comes from creating and establishing an effective learning management shell so when we think about Moodle or d2l or blackboard or any of those other learning management softwares or systems that you can use I think that making sure that you have a good Moodle shell or a good LMS shell set up is one really important part about ensuring accessibility for both asynchronous and synchronous learners so it's strategic because when we think about you know being in class and that synchronous online or synchronous in-class learning opportunity you know if I have handouts or any of that stuff that we're doing I can very easily provide that to the students but it's also making sure that that accessibility is provided for the asynchronous learners and the synchronous online learners as well so I think a lot of it sort of comes from you know right off the bat beginning to think about your LMS design and strategically designing it so that all learners have the opportunity to gather the material that they need to be successful not only in the course but also in you know completing their evaluations or their applications

MELANIE LEFEBVRE: incorporating principles of universal design so that is helpful regardless of whether you're in hyflex delivery and the other thing is again hearing from the students directly I also incorporate feedback regularly throughout my courses so rather than waiting until the official feedback form that happens midway through the semester I have a platform that students can continually add anonymous feedback as to what they like what they want me to continue doing including what maybe isn't going well and what I could be doing instead so that I’m always learning from them and I also like to reach out to students periodically especially asynchronous students and just touch base and verify that things are going okay for them and to see whether or not there's anything that I can do to further support them