From Assistive Technology to Accessible Design: One District’s Journey

Creighton School District
Our Creighton Accessible Design Team

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Our Journey

- Finding Our Vision
- Making It Happen
- Ensuring Tool/Option Availability
- Building Capacity
Finding Our Vision: The Context for Our Journey

Creighton School District’s Vision and Mission

Our Vision:
Creighton neighborhood schools inspire adventurous thinkers, collaborative learners, and kind-hearted leaders.

Our Mission:
We work together to provide a caring, personal learning experience that teaches each child to think, create, and lead.
Finding Our Vision: The Journey Began

We started our journey with one end in mind…

Assistive Technology
Finding Our Vision: The Influence of Chris Bugaj

- Universal Design for Learning Key Concepts
  - Multiple Means of Representation
  - Multiple Means of Expression
  - Multiple Means of Engagement
Finding Our Vision: The Influence of Chris Bugaj

- Redefining Roles
  - Classroom Teachers as "Educational Experience Designers"
  - Special Educators as "Accessible Design Facilitators"
Finding Our Vision: Analyzing our Needs

● Using the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT)
  ○ was confining to our thought process

● Acknowledging the educational reality for all our students
Think of a task that students are typically expected to do in class.

What part of that task may be a barrier for a particular student to learn?
“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”
Finding Our Vision: A New Destination

We changed our course with a *new* end in mind...

Accessible Design for All
COULD YOU PLEASE SHOVEL THE RAMP?

ALL THESE OTHER KIDS ARE WAITING TO USE THE STAIRS. WHEN I GET THROUGH SHOVELING THEM OFF, THEN I WILL CLEAR THE RAMP FOR YOU.

BUT IF YOU SHOVEL THE RAMP, WE CAN ALL GET IN!
Making It Happen: Three Critical Questions

- How do we ensure a meaningful process for identifying the accessible design needs for all students?
- How do we ensure that appropriate tools/options for students are available?
- How do we build the capacity of staff?
Making It Happen: Ensuring a Meaningful Process

- Interdepartmental Collaborations
  - Technology
  - Business
  - Special Education
  - Curriculum and Instruction
  - Human Resources
  - Purchasing
  - Warehouse
  - Maintenance
Making It Happen: Ensuring a Meaningful Process

- We developed procedures
  - How to identify student needs
  - How to document those needs

- Procedures were captured in a district handbook
  - Written to support the work with any student
  - Writing the handbook pushed the team to ensure our thinking was accessible to all staff
  - Making sure it addressed the needs of all audience members
Making It Happen: Ensuring a Meaningful Process

- We created the Student Environment Task Options (SETO)
  - Based on the Student Environment Task Tools (SETT) by Joy Zabala
  - Explicitly define “barriers” as something we present through the curriculum or the environment
  - Focus on “options” to allow for a broader approach to allowing access without limiting thinking to “tools”
Making It Happen: Ensuring a Meaningful Process

- Expanding the QIAT into the QIAD
  - “Quality Indicators for Accessible Design”
  - Expanding scope to include all students
  - Indicating that “Promising Practices” includes consideration of “options” - not just Assistive Technology
  - Bridges the district’s thinking toward UDL implementation
  - Still a work in progress
What are steps you can take to ensure you have a meaningful process?
Ensuring Option Availability: Our Loan Library

- Identifying the Accessible Design Loan Library Focus
  - Supporting students in ALL areas
  - Access to learning through multiple means of representation and engagement
  - Access to demonstrating knowledge through multiple means of expression
Ensuring Option Availability: Our Loan Library

- Identifying currently available district resources
  - Expertise related to identifying options in the areas of communication (SLPs) and motor (OT/PT)
  - Previously purchased tools for Special Education students’ use
  - Instructional technology resources
    - Devices for all students (apps, accessibility)
    - Technology integration support for all teachers
    - Site technology teachers
Ensuring Option Availability: Our Loan Library

- Identifying what was still needed
  - Expertise related to options in other areas (e.g. academics, social/emotional, sensory, etc.)
  - Additional tools
  - Systems for inventory management
Ensuring Option Availability: Our Loan Library

- Meeting the identified needs
  - Hiring an Assistive Technology Specialist
  - 3-Year Purchase Plan for additional tools
  - Check-out and Check-in procedures (website)
What are steps you can take to maximize availability of options?
Building Capacity: Who and How?

- **Who:**
  - Accessible Design Facilitators = All Special Educators
  - Administrators and Instructional Leadership Team

- **How:**
  - Use a “train-the-trainer” model within the district
  - Psychologists, SLPs, OTs, and our PT will become “Accessible Design Liaisons” and provide on-site training and support
Building Capacity: What? - Some Examples

Creation and delivery of professional development

- Accessible Design: What It Is and Why It Is Important
- AD and the Decision-Making Process
- Accessing Tools and Options
- Implementation Process and Progress Monitoring
- Documenting AD in the IEP
- Accessible Design in Specific Content Areas
How can you build staff capacity?
Next Steps in Our Journey

● Publication of Handbook
● Implementation of Loan Library website
● Creation of training modules
● Site Liaisons begin their training sessions and support
● Completion of CSD QIAD for program monitoring
● Professional Development leadership/administrators
Let’s Reflect...

Have we helped to plant a seed for the next steps in your journey?

Do you have any questions for us?
Contact us for additional information:

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