Advancing Accessible Education through
Flexibility, Alignment, Variety, and Explicitness (FAVE)

This handout offers several examples to illustrate how you might apply FLEX Forward's key ideas to identify and mediate barriers to accessible teaching and learning.

FLEX Forward's Accessible Education Framework

What?	Where?		How?	
What barrier(s) to Accessible Education have you identified?	Where within the components of a course might these barriers apply?		How might you mediate this barrier through the application of the FLEX Forward's FAVE four words?	
Physical or Architectural	**Learning Outcomes**			
Information or Communication	**Teaching & Learning Activities**	**Materials**	F	**Flexibility**
Technological		**Methods**	A	**Alignment**
Organizational or Systemic		**Environments**	V	**Variety**
Attitudinal	**Assessments**		E	**Explicitness**

Examples

What?		Where?	How?
Organizational Barrier	• Non-essential and unaligned learning goal	Learning Outcomes	Alignment

---

Barrier: A learning outcome in a course syllabus is disconnected from the other course goals and is not addressed in the schedule of readings, weekly course topics, or existing assignment rubrics.

Suggestion for Accessible Education: After reviewing the course material and consulting with colleagues, you determine that the learning outcome is not an essential component of the course and elect to remove it. This further supports the alignment and clarity of the syllabus and course around the intended and essential learning outcomes.

What?		Where?	How?
Organizational Barrier	● Large class size	Teaching and Learning Activities (Materials & Methods)	Variety Flexibility
Architectural Barrier	● Lecture hall with 600 seats - difficult to hear, see, and participate in class discussion		
Communication Barrier	● Standard participation option of raising hands and speaking orally is challenging for many, especially given class size		

Suggestions for Accessible Education: Listen to Dr. Catherine Anderson describe how she uses technology to provide varied and flexible ways for students to participate in a large class.

What?		Where?	How?
Organizational Barrier	● Sequencing of courses in the department leaves essential skills untaught	Teaching and Learning Activities (Materials & Methods)	Explicitness Alignment
Information Barrier	● Students are not provided with a definition, related learning materials, or referrals to relevant resources on campus		
Attitudinal Barrier	● Believing is is exclusively the student's responsibility to learn academic skills ● Assuming no instructor role in skills instruction		

Barrier: Students are expected to apply a "critical" perspective in your course but are not taught how to do so.

Suggestion for Accessible Education: Rather than assuming students already know what it means to "think critically" in your discipline and how to do so, or expecting students to figure out these skills on their own, critical thinking is explicitly defined and taught as part of your course. Students are provided with course contextual examples, readings, and referrals to campus resources to further their understanding.

What?		Where?	How?
Physical Barrier	● Height of lab equipment	Assessment	Flexibility
Organizational Barrier	● Short window of time for test completion ● High student to lab assistant ratio ● Finite department resources		

Barrier: The height and mechanics of traditional lab equipment and the short window of time for test completion in the lab can disadvantage some students.

Suggestions for Accessible Education:
- A moveable platform with a ramp is created to elevate students who need to remain seated while engaging with lab specimens and equipment. The time available for test completion is extended by half an hour for all students and an additional lab assistant is assigned to invigilate so that all students have the time and supports needed to use the equipment and complete the test.
- Alternatively, and with cost in mind, the decision is made by the Faculty, department or program to budget for and invest in several adjustable tables for lab equipment so that the lab is designed more accessibly and requires fewer ongoing adjustments.