

# The Limits of Open Access and Open Educational Resources: Incorporating Accessibility into the WI+RE Way at UCLA Library

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## Project Background

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- Considered our own roles as OA and OER advocates and members of the WI+RE Leadership Team
- Reflected on ongoing conversations among disability and feminist-disability researchers and advocates
- Noticed accessibility and UDL discrepancies in design process, hiring and training, and auditing, and lack of structural focus on accessibility

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# Problematizing Access/ibility in Open Access

## Open access $\neq$ Accessibility

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*“[A]ccessibility of digital resources including instructional materials and library materials ... touches upon the scholarly communication topics of repositories and copyright”*

(Association of College & Research Libraries, Scholarly Communication Toolkit, 2016).

*The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) website was recently redesigned “for better accessibility in open access scholarly publishing”*

(Directory of Open Access Journals, 2020).

*“[A] world in which anyone can access, build upon, translate, and improve knowledge”*

(Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), n.d.).

## Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Accessibility

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- OERs, and the websites that house them, widely lack accessibility for disabled learners
  - *“OER websites are still not accessible because they have not been considered as a whole, i.e., their interface could be accessible to users though not educational resources and the other way around.”*
- Areas in need of greater attention: perceivability, operability, understandability, and robustness
- Accessible access: extends beyond ensuring accessibility features on websites, signals the need for a fundamental shift in how OA and OER should be framed

## Disability Justice

- Racism, ableism, capitalism, and sexism are interacting forces that impact education broadly and OER development specifically.
- Approaching OERs only from a lens of digital/web accessibility ignores these aspects of disability justice.
- Reflect on how accessible OA might be imagined beyond and including accessible website design, and, crucially, how disability justice might be applied as a conceptual framework for building open access resources and platforms.

## 10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

- 1 INTERSECTIONALITY** “We do not live single issue lives” --Audre Lorde  
Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world “invalid.”
- 2 LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED**  
“We are led by those who most know these systems.” --Aurora Levins Morales
- 3 ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC**  
In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.
- 4 COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANIZING**  
Shifting how social justice movements understand disability and contextualize ableism, disability justice lends itself to politics of alliance.
- 5 RECOGNIZING WHOLENESS**  
People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.
- 6 SUSTAINABILITY**  
We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.
- 7 COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY**  
We honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.
- 8 INTERDEPENDENCE** We meet each others’ needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over our lives.
- 9 COLLECTIVE ACCESS** As brown, black and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.
- 10 COLLECTIVE LIBERATION** No body or mind can be left behind -- only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.

## Case Study: UCLA Library's WI+RE Program

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- OERs take on a wide variety of modalities, including webcomics, interactive worksheets, handouts, short video tutorials, and longer video workshops
- WI+RE's design manifesto, the WI+RE Way, augments our design practices
  - Includes direct reference to the work of accessibility & universal design for learning (UDL)
- Audit revealed that our accessibility practices have not been revisited to include these new modalities, reflect a 'check-boxes' approach to accessibility





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*“Access cannot be treated merely as “economic, political, and technical problems to be solved,” and requires “librarians to assess, and reassess, what access and equity mean beyond the level of practice, or beyond the level of access to materials or information.”*

Kumbier and Starkey, “Access Is Not Problem Solving: Disability Justice and Libraries.” (2020, p. 470)



# The WI+RE Design Process

## Empathy Map

- Center your design around learners and their goals
- Situate your design ideas in real-world learning contexts
- Develop insight into key breakthroughs in the learning process

## Learning Journey Map

- Break down complex learning outcomes into smaller tasks
- Situate your learning outcomes within the learner's process
- Identify related learning outcomes you may want to explore

## 4 Paths Prototype

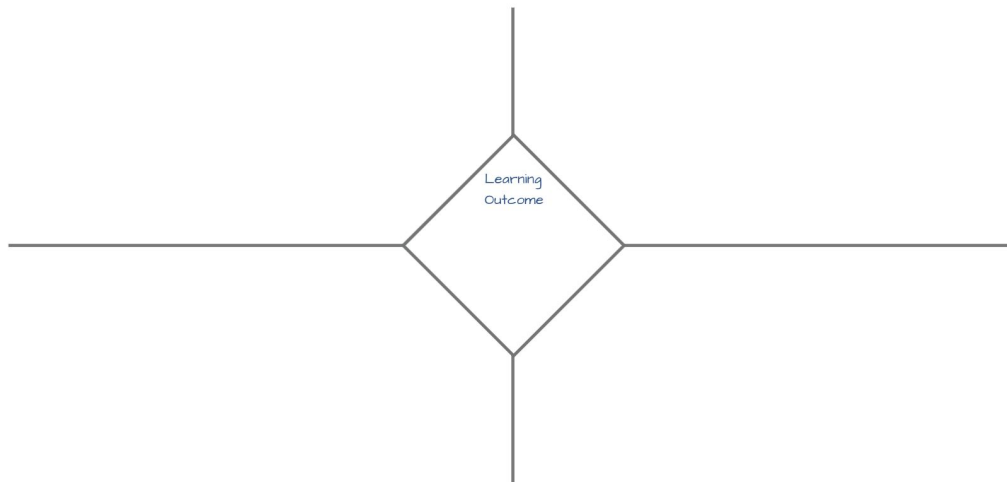
- Leverage divergent thinking to explore multiple pathways
- Explore your learning outcome across different forms of media
- Select an initial approach for further prototyping

## 4 Paths

The 4 Paths Prototype activity allows WI+RE learner-designers to explore various approaches to achieving a learning outcome

### 4 Paths Prototype

leverage divergent thinking to explore multiple pathways.  
explore your learning outcome across different forms of media.  
select an initial approach for further prototyping.



#### How to make a 4 paths prototype:

1. Write the learning outcome you are working on in the center diamond.
2. Rapidly sketch four different approaches to helping students with this learning outcome. Give yourself about a minute to explore, sketch, and jot down notes for each option.
3. After 4 minutes, label your paths based on criteria you generate (e.g., most feasible, most impactful for learners, most fun to make, etc).

#### Tips:

- Explore all options freely and without worry.
- Consider print, digital, video, audio, performance art, animation, in-person activities, anything!

CC BY 4.0, Brecher Cook, D., & Worsham, D. (2018, April). [Let's Build Something!: A Rapid-Prototyping Instructional Design Workshop](#). Pre-conference workshop at the 2018 CARL Conference, Redwood City, CA. adapted from: Gray, D., Brown, S., & Macanuso, J. (2010). *Gamestorming: a playbook for innovators, rulebreakers, and changemakers*.



# Centering Accessibility in Open Educational Resource Development

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(1) employ accessibility as a holistic framework for design and not an afterthought;

(2) build accessibility into training for staff, educators, and designers;

(3) approach accessibility as an iterative process that requires ongoing, collaborative learning and improvement;

(4) resist evangelizing open access and open education resources, acknowledging, instead, the structural critiques of open access and limitations of reforms.

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