

# Ally and UDL: Practical Faculty Supports

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# What is Digital Accessibility?

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- Disabled students must receive all the educational benefits provided by the technology in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, as compared to people without disabilities.
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## **MUST BE ABLE TO:**



Acquire the same interaction,



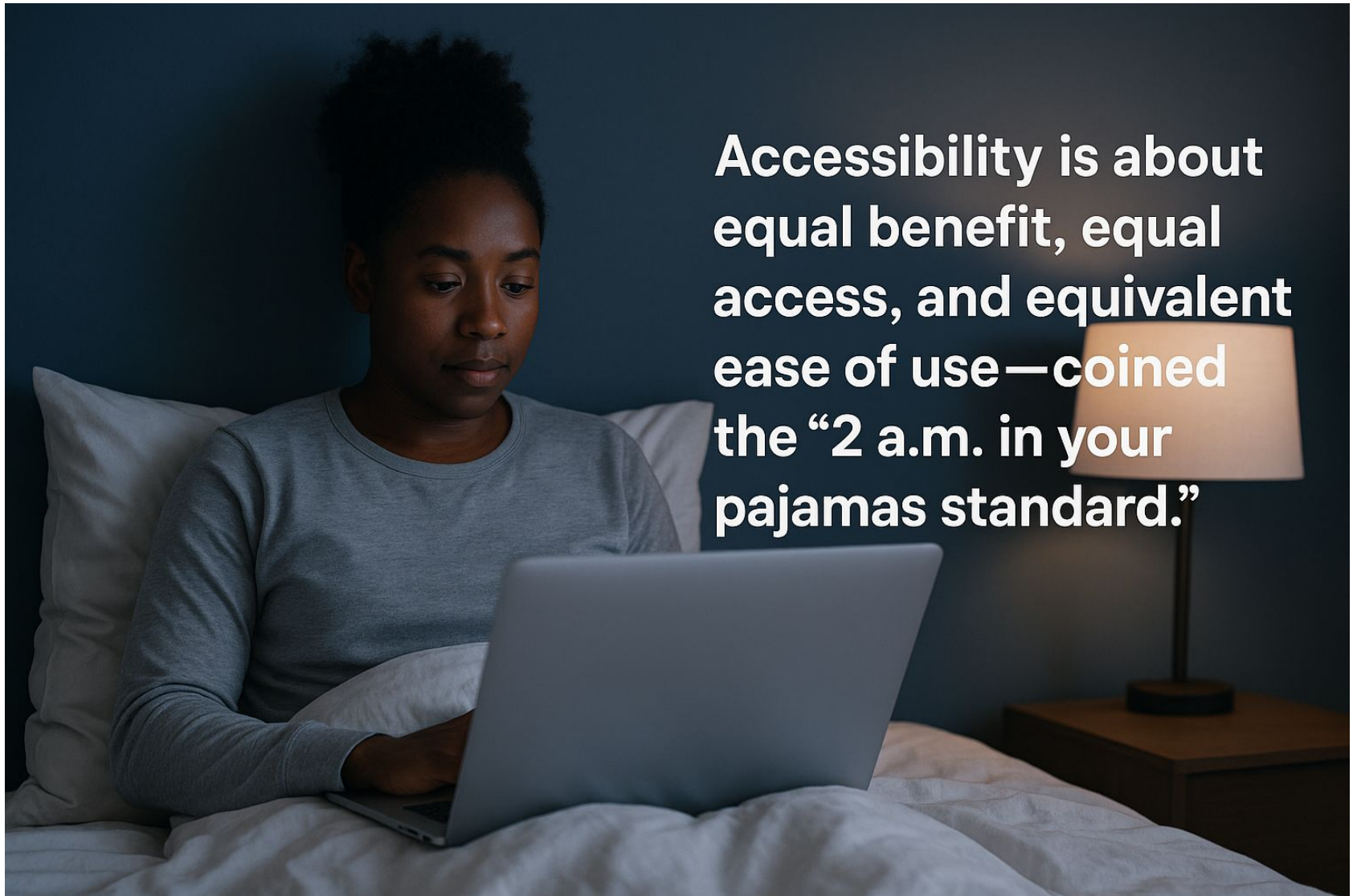
Engage in the same interactions,



Enjoy the same benefits and services

**With substantially equivalent ease of use**

Accessibility applies to all **programs, services, and activities**—not just academic content.



Accessibility is about equal benefit, equal access, and equivalent ease of use—coined the “2 a.m. in your pajamas standard.”

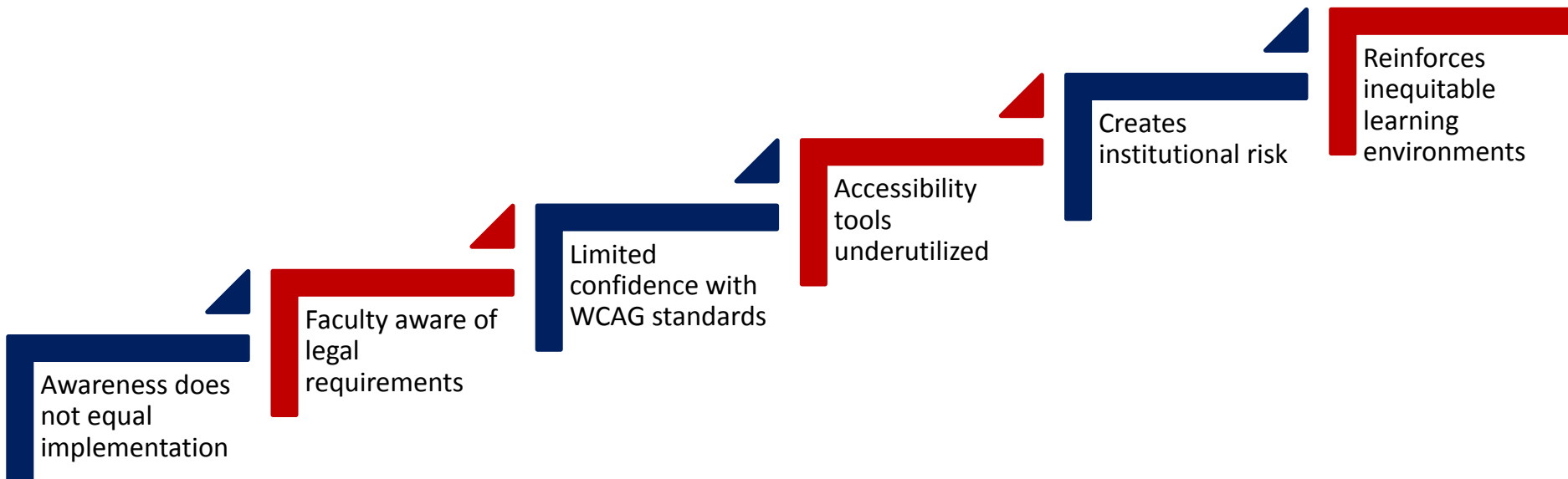
## Why does this matter?

- 2024 ADA Title II Final Rule/WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance by 2026
- Digital accessibility = civil rights obligation (Hill, 2025)
- Faculty central to institutional compliance



# Problem: The Implementation Gap in Faculty Readiness

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Awareness of legal obligations often exceeds instructional confidence and technical skill  
(Coverdale et al., 2024; Lowenthal et al., 2025).

## Pre-Intervention: Awareness Gaps

- Faculty awareness is uneven and tool knowledge is low.

Rank	Perception/Knowledge Item	Mean Score (1–5)	Responses (N)
1	Anthology Ally	2.91	114
2	WCAG	3.17	117
3	Your department's policies or practices for addressing digital accessibility in online courses	3.47	117
4	Title 2 ADA (2024) regulations	3.47	115
5	Your institution's compliance timeline for Title II implementation	3.51	117

N varies because some respondents skipped items.

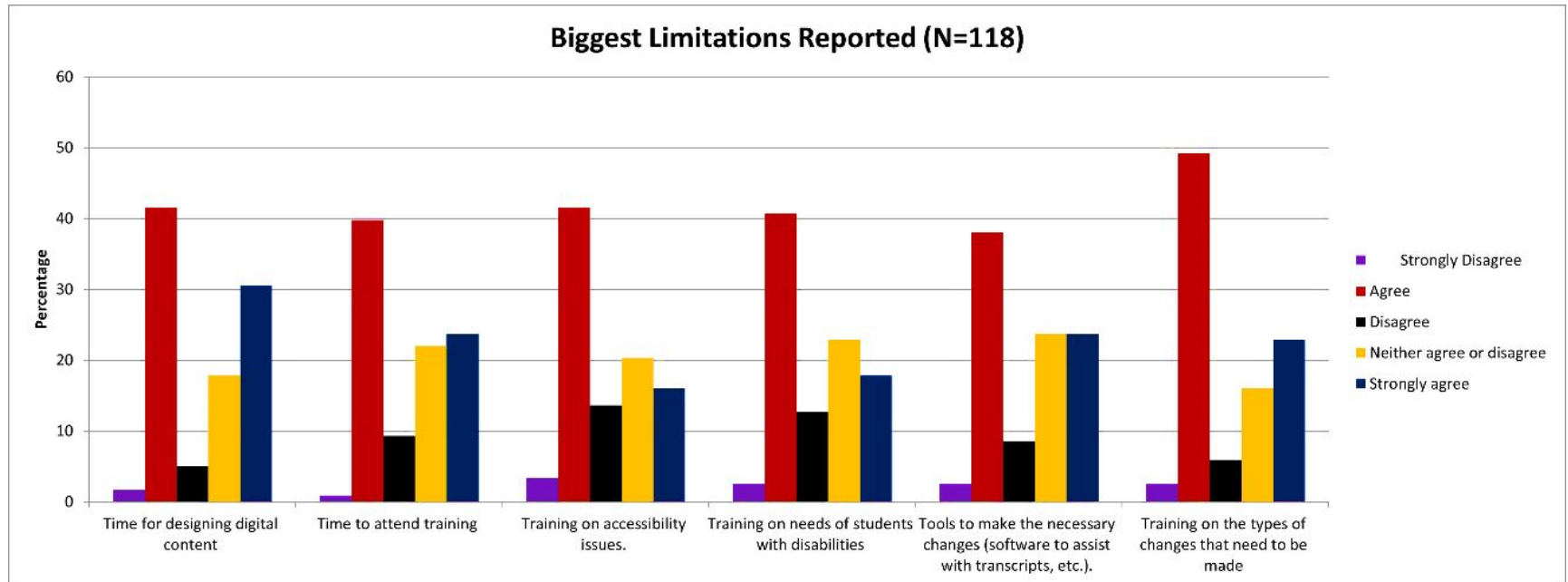
# Theme 1 (Baseline): Accessibility as Compliance



- Viewed primarily as legal requirement
- Focus on accommodations over design
- Reliance on disability services
- Compliance awareness  $\neq$  instructional confidence

## Theme 2 (Baseline): Time & Workload Anxiety

- Overwhelm and uncertainty
- Competing institutional demands
- Fear of unrealistic expectations



# What Faculty Told Us They Needed

More training  
(general and  
topic-specific)

One-on-one or  
hands-on support

Tools to streamline  
remediation

Clearer standards  
and policy  
guidance

Flexible scheduling  
options

Time to update  
materials

# Intervention Structure



Designed directly in response to baseline faculty needs.

- Phase 1: Accessibility remediation with Ally
- Phase 2: UDL-informed course design

# Where UDL Fits In

- UDL=Designing for learner variability from the start
- Moves accessibility from accommodation to instructional design



# How Faculty Needs Shaped the Intervention

<b>What Faculty Needed</b>	<b>What We Did (Intervention)</b>
Hands-on support	1:1 Ally consultations
Help prioritizing fixes	Ally feedback + color indicators
Time constraints	“Progress over perfection” approach
Unclear expectations	85% accessibility benchmark
Flexible learning	Phased model: Accessibility → UDL

# Theme 1: From Compliance to Instructional Design

“

“Accessibility isn’t something I think about at the end anymore — it’s something I consider from the start when I’m building my course.”

*(Final Reflection Interview)*

”

Evidence of Conceptual Shift	Mentions
Expanded Understanding of Digital Accessibility	65
Shift from Compliance to Instructional Purpose	34
Instructional Decision-Making Changes	42

**Source: Final Reflection Codebook**

# Theme 2: Ally as Instructional Scaffold and Reflective Support

“

**“It took the guesswork out of what I should be focusing on.”**

*(Final Reflection Interview)*

**“It made accessibility feel doable instead of overwhelming.”**

*(Final Reflection Interview)*

”

Evidence of Ally as Scaffold	Mentions
Role of Anthology Ally as Instructional Support	92
Confidence and Skill Development	39
Motivation and Feedback	12

Source: Checkpoint Reflections Codebook / Final Reflection Codebook

# Theme 3: What Faculty actually changed in their courses

“

**“I no longer just upload vendor PowerPoints; I redesign them so they are accessible and easier to navigate.”**

*(Final Reflection Interview)*

**“The process has been helpful in changing the way that I select materials in my face-to-face and online courses.”**

*(Final Reflection Interview)*

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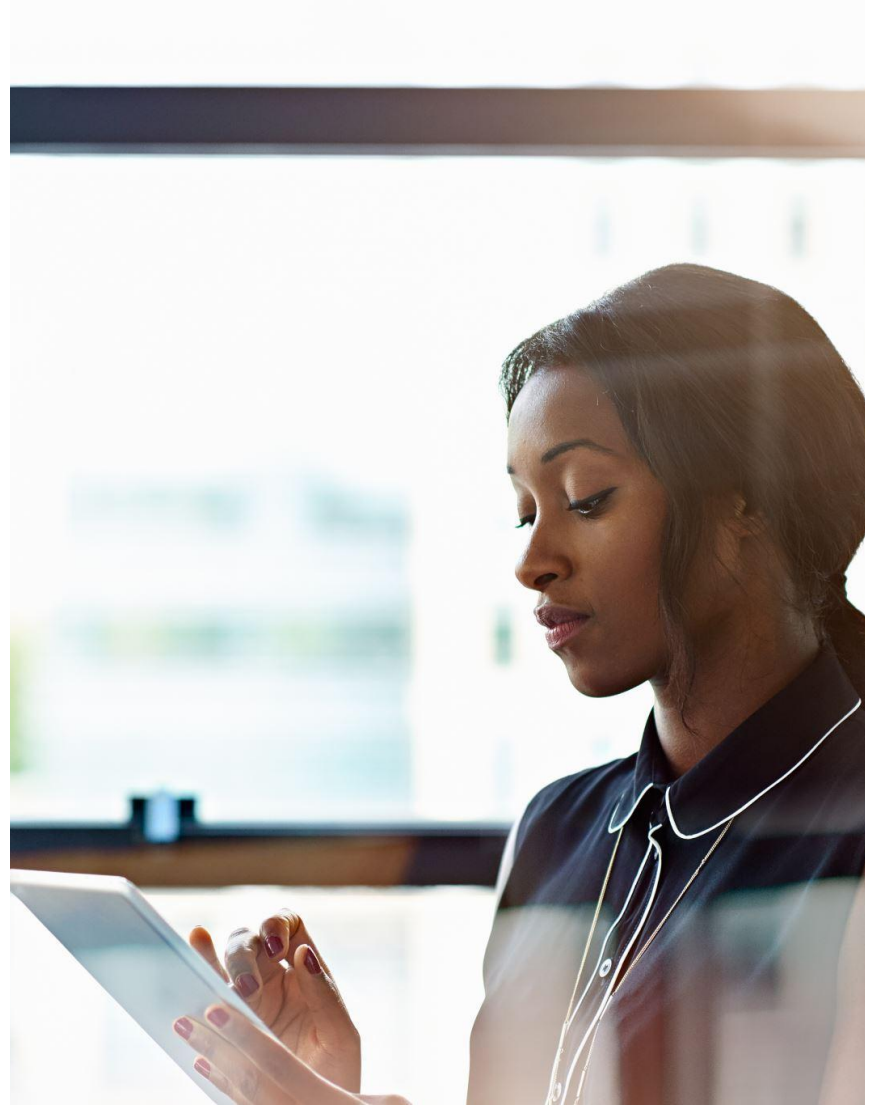
Instruction Decisions	Mentions
Document structure	103
Media	73

Source: Field Notes Reflections Codebook

## Theme 4: Confidence Through Iteration

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- Incremental remediation
- “Progress over perfection” mindset
  - Increased instructional independence



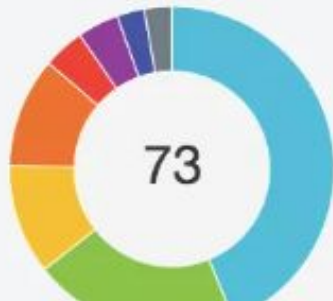
Course accessibility score



## Introduction to Languages of all kinds

Overview

Content



### All course content

Word document	32
PDF document	15
Image	8
Presentation	8
HTML file	3
Page	3
Other	2
Item	2



Content with the easiest issues to fix

38

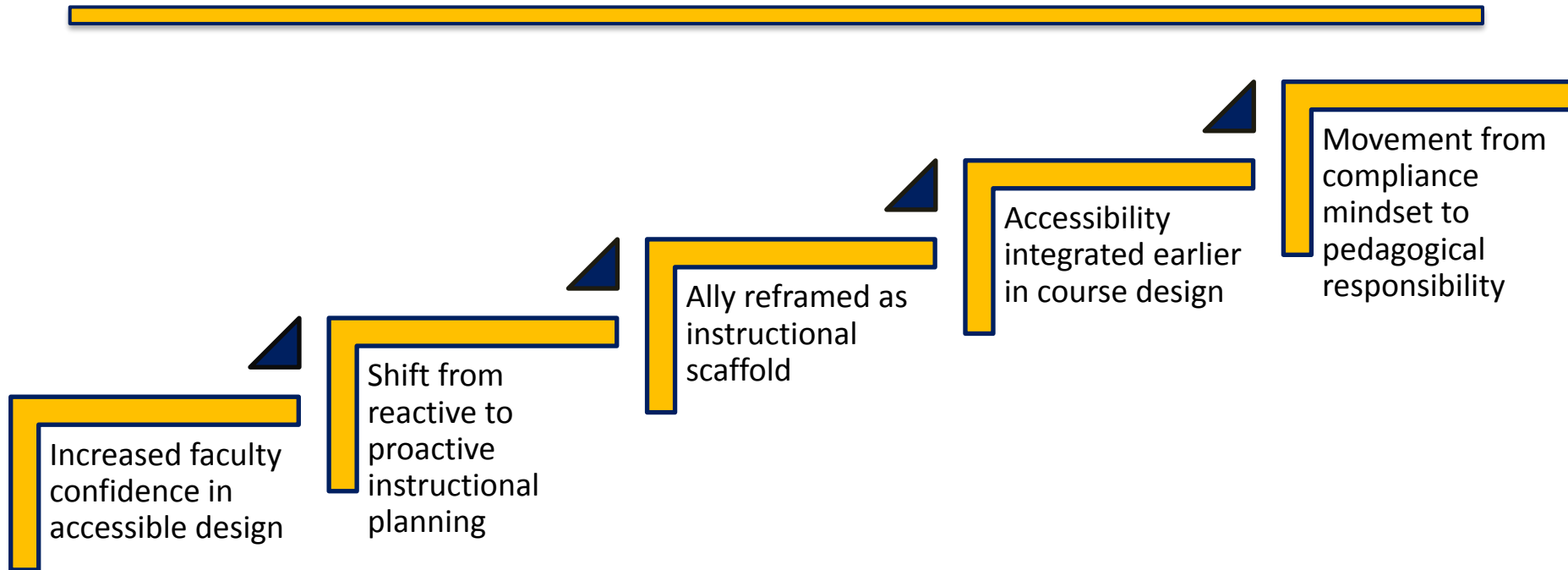
Start

Fix low scoring content

## What Faculty Actually did in Ally

- Fixed heading structures in documents
- Added alt text to images
- Replaced scanned PDFs
- Improved document readability
- Used Ally feedback to prioritize changes

# What Changed Over the Course of the Intervention?



# Practical Strategies You Can Use

Pair Ally with  
coaching/consultation

Use “progress over  
perfection” framing

Focus on high-impact  
fixes first

Build reflection into  
the process

# If You Support Faculty

- Don't lead with compliance—lead with teaching
- Show quick wins
- Normalize overwhelm
- Provide ongoing (not one-time) support



# If You're an Instructor Using Ally

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1

Start with one course

2

Use Ally indicators to prioritize

3

Fix structure before aesthetics

4

Think: "Can all students access this?"

# ALLY+UDL Faculty Support Framework

- <https://tinyurl.com/FacultySupportframework>



# Questions?

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- Thank you
- Questions

