

Pedagogy Matters: Episode 26 Transcript

Hello and welcome to the latest episode

of the Pedagogy Matters Podcast.

The purpose of this podcast is to bring

the force and key topics of conversation

in relation to learning and teaching,

to discuss and break down aspects

of practice, and provide snippets,

advice and guidance as to how to

integrate these into our daily practice.

Today I'm delighted to be joined

by Kelly Moore from Jisc.

We'll be discussing inclusive practice,

accessibility within learning and teaching.

Kelly, good morning. How are you?

Hello, I'm very good.

Thanks very much. Fantastic.

Well, thank you for joining us.

You know it's a topic that kind of

really keen to to unpack and explore

and kind of really discuss further and
obviously what a wealth of experience
with you with your time of discs.

So, yeah, can we look forward to it?

And I think to kick off Kelly might be
useful if you want to kind of share
a little bit about your role about
what you do just that's OK yeah, sure.

So.

I work at Jisc,
which provides um like digital
services and support to all of
UK further and higher education.

And I'm a subject specialist
and there's a bunch of subjects,
specialists at disk with specialisms
and different areas.

And my my specialism is accessibility
and assistive technology.

So I largely do things like provide
advice and guidance to our Members,

which is just anybody that's working in a.

College,

our our university and across the UK,

so lots of advice and guidance.

We also facilitate communities

as well to help people learn from

each other and support one another.

And we do training and things

as well and policy work.

So we do a bunch of stuff,

but basically the sort of common

thread running through all the work

that I do is digital accessibility and

inclusive practice and using technology

and making the most of it not great.

Thanks.

Some place to start is to kind of

really explore or unpick what is

meant by the term accessibility.

Um,

using assistive technology or

inclusive practice.

Because I think, yeah,

that the word accessibility might

mean different things to different people.

So I guess in your world and from

your perspective,

what does that kind of word or

phrase mean to yourself?

Yeah.

So when we're talking about accessibility,

because I realized, yeah,

it can cover lots of things,

for instance, like building accessibility,

but for us because.

You know,

just covers all things kind of digital.

We're talking about digital accessibility,

um,

so and we'll come on in a moment

to the kind of legal requirements

around that as well.

But really what it means is that.

Users, whether they're students or staff,
can use digital content and access
it without barriers.

So it's really just about creating stuff
sort of in the way it should be created.

But you know,
sometimes people aren't aware of.

Things are doing that might
be creating barriers.

Um, so it's about just creating stuff
that is able to be used by everybody.

Um, whether they're using
assistive technology or not,
whether they've got diverse
user needs or disabilities.

It also means that content will
display consistently and properly.

Across different platforms
and on different devices.

So we saw especially um,

you know during kind of lockdown

periods in in the UK we realized

just how many students were using

their phones to access content.

And the great thing with accessible

content is that it displays

well on mobiles and it interacts

well because I think a lot of

us have had the experience of

maybe especially during you know.

Surround maybe sending lifting

of lockdowns or whatever.

We things like, um,

restaurant menus and stuff where like

QR codes and you've got and then

you would get this like weird kind

of image or PDF that you'd have to

kind of zoom in on and it would all be.

And that's what access inaccessible

content looks like on a mobile phone

and accessible stuff just displays well.

And so there's loads of benefits to that.

But what we're talking about is

digital stuff and primarily content

that is accessed through a browser.

That's the sort of rule of thumb

is what we're talking about.

Things access through browser,

nothing I missed it kind of really simple.

And OK,

jot down some notes and forgive me

creating stuff that can be used by everybody.

I know I mean the digital no,

but that's it because I'm a big believer

in no matter what topic we discussed,

there's a lot of different views,

descriptions,

analysis,

it's kind of whatever it means.

I'm a big believer in anything really,

really simple.

So we're talking through and we

are framing digital accessibility,
it's about creating content or
or learning or materials that can
be used by everybody.

The respect of a platform and I
think it's a really pertinent issue
because right now as we know even now
we're in a postcard world where we're,
we're colleagues especially in college
are returned typically back on campus.

That doesn't mean the solar learning as
background campus face to face and paper.

There's a lot more digital use
which is interesting and I know
you you touched a little bit upon
the legal requirements.

So it's useful for go there first then
we're going to look broader and think well,
what does this actually mean in practice
to me in my role and so on and so forth.

So over to you for the legal bit.

OK, yeah, no pressure.

Yeah.

So, um,

so,

yeah,

obviously like I mentioned creating

content that's accessible is doing

it the right way and there's

also as you mentioned as well,

there's real you know kind of ethical

and practical benefits to that.

But there is a legal imperative now as well.

So the public sector bodies

website and mobile applications

accessibility regulations as an issue,

we often it's,

it's abbreviated to PS

BAR or just accessibility.

Regulations and we're introduced in 2018,

yeah, 2018 um coming in sort of as part

of our European directive at that time.

But it's now UK law um and it's non devolved.

So it covers all of the UK equally and it is

monitored by a part of the Cabinet Office

called the Central Data and Digital Office.

So what the Accessibility Regulation says

if you're a public sector body, which.

Virtually all colleges will be,

unless they're kind of private colleges.

Um, they need to be producing digital content

that meets a certain defined standard,

and that is a standard that

means the content meets.

Accessibility requirements,

so that's standard,

is known as wiki Tag 2.1 AA and Wiki

Tag is an abbreviation of the web

content accessibility guidelines,

so this is a legal requirement.

And that will be affecting all our colleges.

Um, so you need to have, you know,

kind of plans in place to to

improve your content,

to ensure new content meets these standards.

In terms of how the law is

implemented across the public sector,

there's kind of two strands to it.

One is there's the monitoring and

that is kind of checking that people

are doing what they need to be doing.

So websites or digital content

is selected kind of at random.

By the central digital and data

office for monitoring.

So they will test your content

and we know that this year, um,

well, in the last 12 months,

further education colleges have

seen a kind of increase in their

content being monitored.

And you know that you've been

monitored because you receive an

e-mail or a letter from the Cabinet

Office that tells you you've been monitored and it tells you where your content has problems and you have 12 weeks to remediate your content and come up with a plan.

So that's the monitoring.

You can also be monitored as a result of a direct complaint being made about your content, and basically anyone can do that, and that can be a visitor.

Student or a member of staff.

And this isn't just websites, it's often, sometimes people think it's just websites.

It's basically everything accessed through a browser and that includes third party content that you've paid for.

So software and systems, you become responsible for them at the point that you pay for them.

So that's the monitoring.

But then there's the other bit

that people are kind of interested

in is the enforcement.

So what actually happens if

if it all goes pear shaped.

So if your response is um.

Not quite, um,

satisfactory to to the monitoring

or the complaint, then, um,

the evidence will be passed to the

equality and Human Rights Commission,

who can then take legal action

using the Equality Act.

And because the Equality Act, um, when?

Legal action is taken using that.

There's kind of confidentiality agreements.

So that means when people say,

well, what actually happened,

it's like, well, I don't know,

um, only the people who were

involved know what what happens.

But it is, you know, it's a proper law.

It's very similar in terms of how it came
in to GDPR and except the thing with
GDPR is that the fines were very explicit
and sort of focus the mind somewhat.

But um, we don't know what the,
what the penalties are for
for noncompliance with, um,
accessibility regulations,
but we do know that it's you don't
want to get to that point. And so,
so it needs to be taken kind of seriously.

So the requirements are that your
content meets a certain standard,
but there's also another thing as well,
which is that you must have on your
website and accessibility statement and
that needs to follow government wording.

And it needs to stay, um,
what you're doing to make your

site more accessible.

It needs to be transparent about
any problems that you do have and
what you're going to do to fix them.

And also very importantly as well,
it needs to have a contact name
and details for anybody that has
that's experiencing difficulties.

And that's really important.

That's the sort of thing that cddo look for,
but it's also really important in
terms of dealing with problems.

Before they get escalated as well,
it's better if someone comes to you and
tells you they're having difficulty
and you fix that rather than they
they make a complaint about you.

So so it's all about kind of transparency
and open communication about what you're
doing and where you've got problems.

Not great.

Well Kelly,

I think you've done that very
clearly because it's a very complex
area that can legal requirements.

So it makes total sense.

And I think for for colleagues

who are listening, um,

I think it's useful to kind
of provide that context.

We have a mixture of people

who will be uh management,

senior management,

who are responsible for which

part of the website and connect

external facing comments,

but also quite a few lecturers who

are listening in terms of well what

does this mean to me which I was

going to move into now in terms of and

what I will say is I'm no expert whatsoever.

But what I have noticed is,

again,

since the COVID time and through

Office 365 and other platforms,

there are a whole host of different things.

I'm going to say things because

that's what I used to do,

to kind of mention lots of different things,

but there are a whole host of

different tools out there which can

be used and kind of really embraced.

And I'm sure there's aspects

of AI you might mention now.

So I guess the key but now is so.

I'm a practitioner. How do I do it?

What tools are out there that can help me,

to support me, to help me develop this?

Uh, so, yes. What are your thoughts on that?

Yeah. Where do we start?

Yeah, sure. Well, first of all,

when you first approach accessibility, it can

look like a very technical and large area.

But I think the thing to be reminded that,
especially for lecturing staff,
there's a whole raft of stuff that
actually they don't need to concern
themselves with that is the remit of um.
You know, web developers and designers.
And you know.
Content creators and things
it's it's a lot of the stuff is.
Not stuff for them to worry about.
So so the the best thing to do is to
focus on well what does impact um,
lectures and what can you do.
And actually it's quite,
um sort of focused area.
So if you are creating.
And for instance,
documents or PowerPoints,
those need to be,
um, accessible,
because in all likelihood they'll

be uploaded to your virtual learning environment and that obviously comes.

Under scope of things accessed through a browser and so the great thing is as you mentioned there's there's an increase you'll notice in 365 and and other platforms as well and to providing tools to help you to do this.

So both word and PowerPoint have got inbuilt accessibility checkers.

And and they will kind of go through your document and flag where there's where there's issues.

A cool thing with that is that.

When you've done that a few times, you actually start to see,

OK, actually,

if I just did things in a certain way the first time,

I don't have to go back and fix them.

And it could be very simple.

It's really, again,

it's about constructing

things in the correct way.

So for instance,

in a Word document having like

an actual heading, you know,

attributing the text with a heading style

rather than just making text bigger and bold.

And that helps lots of people who are

accessing using assistive technology.

It also means when things are

opened on different devices,

it will display consistently.

And similarly with PowerPoint as well.

When you run the PowerPoint

accessibility checker,

it will do things like ask

you where there's an image.

Is this image just decorative?

Sometimes it is just decorative.

You've got something to look nice.

Or is it conveying information?

And where it's conveying information you

need to pop in a little descriptor so that,

and that's known as

alternative text or alt text,

so.

There's there's lots of things

um in place to support you when

you're creating your own content.

To make sure it's accessible

and again we provide,

you know I'll point to this in a moment,

lots of guidance on on how to do this.

Obviously it gets a bit more um.

As you know a bit more complex

when you get into subjects are

more like it's kind of STEM

subjects where your diagrams.

And images may be containing more

complex information that needs to

be described in a certain way.

And again, that's the sort

of thing like it disk.

And within our communities,

we've got dedicated groups who support

one another with um doing that and um,

you know, direct people to resources

that will help with that. So.

So, yeah, so, so word and PowerPoint

are a really good place to start.

And then the other thing to think about

is the tools that you're using as well.

And you know, if you're using,

for instance, online collaboration tools,

you need to make sure that everyone's

going to be able to use those.

Quick way to find out is to just

Google like the name of the tool and

the word accessibility to see if

they've got an accessibility statement.

Um.

And again with with third party

tools as well is um.

Although.

Your college is actually assumes the

responsibility for tools being in

inaccessible if they've been paid for.

What we can do is push back onto

suppliers and ask them to provide

accessibility information and also

to tell them like we need to be

curing stuff that is accessible.

It will start to embed it in

your procurement as well to start

pushing back that responsibility

onto the developers and suppliers

and inform your decisions.

So those are a couple of things.

That that can be done, um,

in terms of a big one we get

asked about a lot.

Is an,

especially since you know 2020

is um what to do about video.

This is the number of ways to

make video accessible,

but the one that most people are

sort of focused on is captioning.

So there's a lot of,

you mentioned kind of AI and the AI

underpinning automatic captioning

is getting better all the time.

In some cases,

it is comparable to human

captioning in terms of humans.

We'll make mistakes as well as AI,

you know, it's kind of it's it's it's it's.

It's it's on a level there,

but there can be discrepancies

depending on um sometimes like

accent or or the way that people

people speak because it is basically

it's just machine learning.

It will work with what it's

most familiar with.

So it is getting better, but what?

And we do appreciate that um,

checking and correcting captioning

on video is very time consuming,

but that's um,

just explain why that's necessary.

So with with video, um,

the the kind of legal requirement is that.

Automatic captioning isn't

actually enough in itself.

Captions have to be checked and corrected.

Automatic captioning can be very

decent and sometimes we've had,

you know, we've just,

we've made videos for the automatic

captioning is almost kind of flawless.

But we do recognize that

sometimes that won't be the case.

It can be really time consuming,

but for instance,

one of the things that just does is

there's an arm of Jisc known as chest.

Which does.

It negotiates like licensing

agreements on behalf of the sector.

It's nonprofit,

it's supplier agnostic,

but it exists to basically

save the sector money.

And one one of the agreements

they've got at the moment is

for I think A2 called VERBIT,

which is a caption correction service

and like I use that myself, I make.

I take advantage of that.

It turns basically like a 6

hour job into a 10 minute job.

So you know there's there are there

are tools out there as well and

services that you can use as well.

Nothing that's really interesting and it

points you mentioned there are really,

I'm gonna say key but also

quite simple to use.

Um, so just jump back to what you said in

terms of of kind of word and PowerPoint,

in terms of digital accessibility checker,

I talked to Greater Waverly training

yourself to be aware of kind of

which of the cues that often pop

up and feel they haven't seen.

You click on word itself,

you click on review at the top and then

check accessibility along the top bar.

It'll give you a review and a rating,

some pointers as to what to

consider and you're actually right

in terms of headings and titles.

A trains you to use the titles within

word therefore it works accessible

which is yeah it's really quite

simple and on the video point in

terms of captions I'm sure I saw some

research in the day amount of young

people watching Netflix with with the

subtitles on with the captions on.

I mean I don't know why but

I'll do that now as well,

not because my age I hope but periodically

becomes second nature to watch it

whilst kind of watching a video there.

So I think the more digital content

that we have is is education providers.

It's it's essential that it is

accessible for exactly those reasons.

You mentioned there as well,

yeah,

I mean another way of dealing with

video as well is also thinking about,

you know,

the amount of video that you do need

to upload because I think there

was a bit of a thing, you know,

when we were all using teams and zoom.

And it was so easy to record and

pop it onto YouTube or whatever.

Um.

I think you know like my my personal

tickets that may be too much video

was it was getting uploaded and

and it's not just from an you know

from the point of view of well the.

You know,

the amount of time it takes to

correct captions.

There's also,

um,

there's a lot of value in curating your

video content as well because for a start,

it's, you know,

there's a digital carbon

footprint to uploading video.

So it's kind of like I was sick of it.

So digital landfill,

it's like if you're uploading video

that's not being watched and,

you know, that's like.

And occupying space on on a server,

it's it's generating energy so

we shouldn't be you know,

doing that. There's also um, you know,

sometimes a risk as well and putting

up content that then goes out of date.

You should be taking content down

as soon as as soon as it goes

out of date usually 12 months.

And this data protection issues

as well of different people are

speaking in a video, you know,

like videos of discussions and meetings

and things probably it's not good at

necessarily a good idea to share them.

So The thing is if you kind of take that

approach of curating your video to making it.

You know more, um.

You know, more quality and

more impactful put down there.

Then it makes the whole thing like

captioning and and providing transcripts

is a bit easier because you've got

like less content to deal with.

It's just a bit more streamlined.

And also from a students perspective,

no, I was a big believer in again

over especially lockdown period.

There was, I used the term a lot of noise.

There's a lot of noise out there because

you're absolutely there's so many videos

out there you don't know where to start.

And again when working with our

learners and our student population,

it's really important.

Same post.

Into appropriate.

But it was me and may

not be relevant to them.

Yes,

there's an activity in there around students,

self regulated and that themselves and

identify what's useful and relevant to them.

But no, you're absolutely right in

terms of the quality of video content.

I've noticed significantly improved

over the last two to three years.

But there's a lot of work to be

done there and that space there as

well and making sure that that video

content is accessible there as well.

So,

so I guess conscious time

is racing away from us.

What I'm keeping on pick is

one of the key principles.

A considerable touched upon one or

two there in terms of creating them

and kind of making them relevant.

Are there any other principles to

consider or key measures to consider

when using tools around accessibility?

I think well,

if we go in terms of principles,

if we go to like very kind of high level

um of sort of strategic level is that.

And accessibility involves lots of

different people across a college.

So although we're thinking about,

you know,

perhaps the practitioner's perspective here,

there's a lot of other folks involved

and it requires a lot of join up.

And you're talking about folks because

you mentioned responsibility earlier

and there's like accountability as well.

It's like who's desk is that letter

going to land on when there's a,

you know, an issue?

It's not going to be a lecturer's desk.

It's gonna be someone in senior

management that's that's going to be held.

Countable and but it is everybody

in the organization is responsible,

but you've also got people like

your vile managers and library

and folks procurement.

We've got all these different people that

need to be involved.

So let's say one of the key

principles is working together and

creating a shared vision and plan

for how you're going to do it.

Because again with among staff,

there's going to be some people

who are more confident about

using accessibility checkers.

Or, you know, et cetera and some who.

It, you know, it might be completely

new to them and they might not really

understand why it's important because

they might look at their stuff and think,

well looks OK,

but not realized like that.

Actually it's going to present

barriers to folks.

So what I'd say is the kind of

ultimate thing to crack is getting

some senior management buy in.

Because that's when.

It becomes a priority and like

one of my colleagues often says

who works in kind of strategy,

it's like if this isn't important.

To the people in leadership,

why should it be important to me?

You know, so it needs that leadership,

ownership and then at that point as well,

then you get, you know,

you're more likely to get time

and resources released for it.

So what we do at Jisc with

colleges and you know we don't,

we don't charge for this

we we offer a workshop.

To people working in colleges

called Vision for accessibility.

And a large part of that is actually

getting all the key people together.

You know, it's we say around the table,

but it's around the teams room

because it's online, but it's,

it's to make sure everybody's

actually got shared vision.

And you know where they can actually

support each other and create a road map.

So I would say that's the number one thing.

Um is joined up approach with UM

leadership buy in is is absolutely key.

I think that's where the colleges

that do this well,

that's what they're doing.

Otherwise you'll get like little pockets

of good practice and then other areas

that are just completely neglected so.

That's absolutely key.

I think the other thing is,

um, like you were,

you know,

sort of keen to emphasize as well is that

we have tools at our fingertips that we

don't have to pay for that can support us.

Um,

so you've got the inbuilt tools

in Microsoft Office.

There's also lots of other free ones as well.

And we direct people to lots of free

stuff and approaches in a guide.

We do lots of online guidance,

but probably our best starting

point is if you just Google.

Practical steps um to meeting

accessibility regulations from Jisc

and that gives you lots of links to

free checkers and and things that

help you generate your statement

and things like that as well.

And the third principle I would

say as well is beyond your college

is the best way to find out how

to do something is talking to

people who've already done it.

So that's why we facilitate,

we do loads of community stuff.

We've got an absolute

massive community in teams.

I think at the moment it's got 1400

users on there with about, I don't know,

I've got about 20 channels at least

of like for different subjects,

you know there's, there's.

We've got channels for all

sorts of different things. Um.

But we also do online drop in

clinics and got mailing lists as

well if that's something you prefer.

We've got ideas rooms um which are
done in zoom where people just come
along and chat and we're also um
for this year we're developing and
buddying and as a as an approach
like between organizations to
help you know that facilitate
that peer-to-peer support and
learning and Co production as well.

So I would say you know.

My kind of third big principle is
just get stuck in the accessibility
and assistive technology.

Communities are really friendly,
really generous with their knowledge
and it's like if you know nothing,
you're just as welcome as someone
who's like a tip top expert.

And we do loads of stuff around
that and it doesn't cost anything.

Like all the things we've been

talking about today comes,

you know, provided by Jisc um,

it's it doesn't cost,

doesn't cost you anything.

It's all inclusive or you're just membership.

No,

I think that's a really good point

to kind of share because it's a

lot of people will be aware of

just but they won't know what

they do and how they can benefit

individuals and their rules.

And as you rightly mentioned it

structures practitioners as a whole

host different roles across college

sector that can be mindful of this.

No, I think that's really important.

So yeah,

I I would implore listeners to do

that to 1st to kind of have a look at

the just website and understand a bit

more about kind of what's available,

what's on offer but no.

And then secondly,

totally agree, talk to people,

learn,

share magpie from each other collaborating.

You know all those different aspects

there because it's a common challenge.

It's a common problem that we can

only kind of learn from each other

and and kind of work individuals

who work collaboratively to kind

of to address accessibility issues

and try and help make what about

puts you will up your website

whether it be a learning experience

as accessible as possible.

But oh, well,

Kelly,

thank you Rotary your time and we've

just got magic complete that within time.

Then I think we're finished on a
really positive note in the sense
of there's a load of tools out
there to kind of go and look at.

And again,

I'll just kind of repeat really
what you've said in the sense
of the starting point for you,
if you can read it.

Keen,

is the Google just practical steps
to meeting accessibility because
I've done that from the website.

There's lots of information there,
but also your details from
there to kind of get
in touch with and you and your
colleagues and support listeners.

So Kelly, fantastic.

Thank you for your time and look forward
to catch up again in the near future.

OK. Thanks very much, son.