ACCESSIBILITY & DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

Brown Bag Session

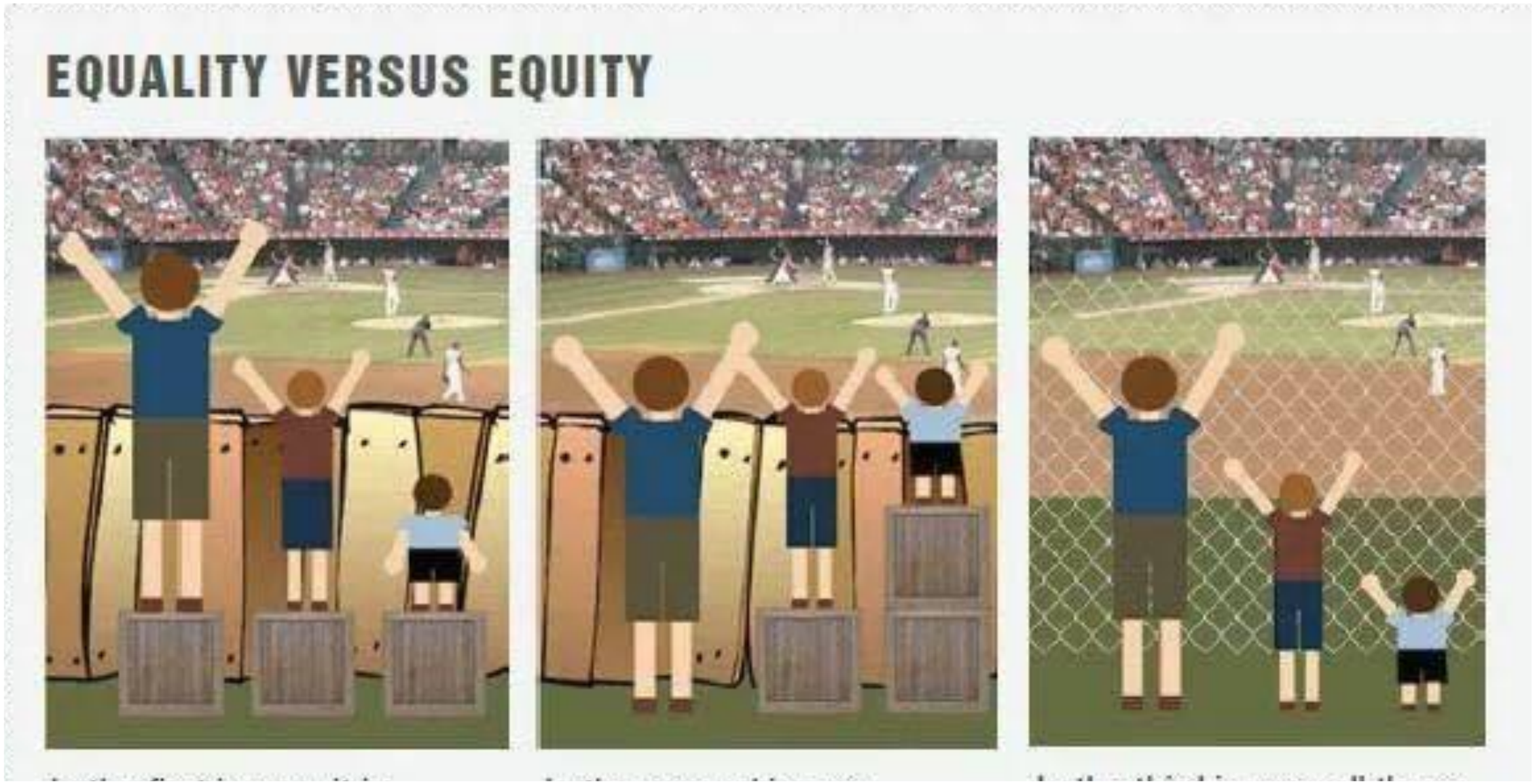
26 October 2017

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is accessibility?
- Why is it worth planning ahead for accessibility?
- What are some practical steps toward creating accessibility?
- What are the challenges to creating accessible environments?

ACCESSIBILITY VS ACCOMMODATION

Link: Equality vs Equity from the Atlanta Woman

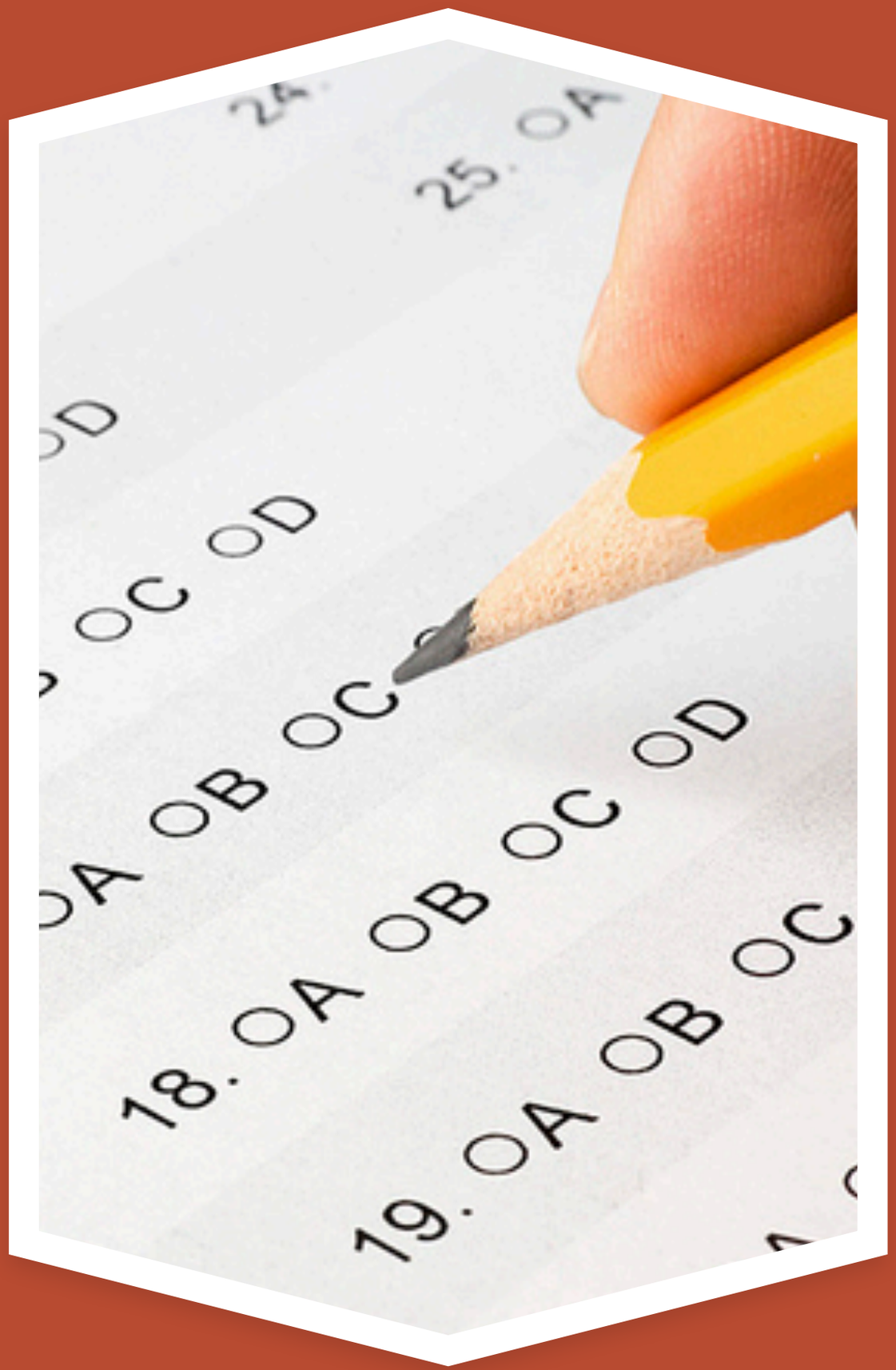


Alt text: Three images. In the first three children - tall, average height, short, stand behind a wooden fence, each on top of a box, watching a baseball game. Only the tall and average-height person can see. In the second image, the tall child does not stand on a box, the average child has one box, the short child has two. They're the same height and can all see over the fence. In the third image, the wooden fence is replaced by a chain link fence. All three children are on the ground (no boxes) and can see through the fence.

MODELS OF DISABILITY

Medical Model of Disability

- Individual issue linked to medical diagnosis of the body
- Disease or illness
- Solution is medical intervention



ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIFIC CASES, BUT NOT SOCIAL CHANGE

Example: Extra time on an exam

MODELS OF DISABILITY

Social Model of Disability

- Disability is located in the society
- Result of barriers and attitudes and exclusion rather than physical reality

CHANGE SOCIETY SO EVERYONE CAN MOVE AND THINK EQUALLY

Example: Curb Cuts

WHY PLAN AHEAD?

- **Practical:**
  - No extra work to meet student needs
  - OMG the retrofit…
  - Example from class blog: Link to a student's post

WHY PLAN AHEAD?

- **Humanistic:**
  - Care and compassion for students
  - Emotional + physical labor of working to be believed

WHY PLAN AHEAD?

- **Good for everyone:**
- Student requests for more media, smaller content chunks
- Cognitive disabilities
  - Struggles w/ perception & processing, memory, attention (see article about cognitive disabilities from WebAIM)

PRACTICAL STEPS

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- **Designing the Syllabus** (UGC 111 Fall 2017)
  - Nested headings (H1, H2, H3)
  - Descriptive links (not just “click here”)
  - Alt Text for all images (Microsoft Word; Google Docs)
  - Designing for Screen Readers from WebAim and Cognitive Disabilities

PRACTICAL STEPS

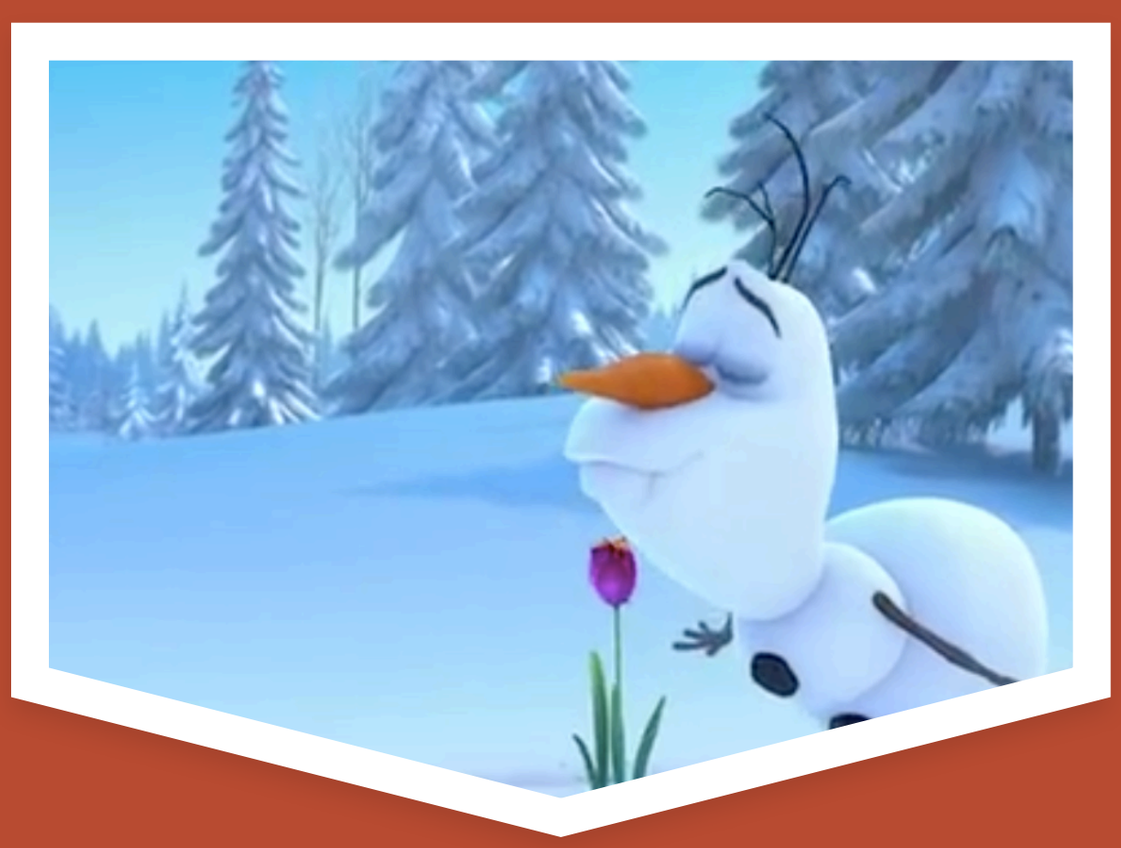
- **Websites & Media for Teachers & Students**
- HTML Codesniffer
- Provide transcripts and subtitles for videos, podcasts, etc.
- How to create POUR websites
- Choose accessibility-friendly designs

PRACTICAL STEPS

Involve students (especially students with disabilities) from the very beginning

A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

- Deaf Space: Video from Vox



- Frozen Trailer with Audio Description

CHALLENGES TO ENACTING ACCESSIBILITY?

Or questions on how to increase accessibility in your course?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Digital Humanities Summer Institute: Accessibility & Digital Environments DHSI 2017
- Collaborative Bibliography on Zotero
- Everything from WebAIM