

 Mighty Guides

# EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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# FOREWORD

Blackboard understands that the way people learn is dynamic and that the education landscape is continuously evolving. Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable student and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. And one of the things that technology can do is to help “Expand Educational Opportunity.”

Whether it is providing anytime / anywhere access to learning, expanding the availability of courses to all students regardless of location, fostering additional faculty and student engagement, enabling personalized learning, or making online learning more accessible to students with disabilities, Blackboard is at the forefront of working with institutions to provide technology and services that focus on the learner and improve student outcomes.

As a leader in enabling technology to help learners, educators, institutions and companies thrive in a complex and changing environment, we help our clients see the possibilities to come. We have the experience and expertise to make a positive difference throughout the world.

We’re proud to sponsor this eBook. We hope these essays help you open more doors for students and expand educational opportunity for everyone, wherever they are, whatever their needs, and however they learn.



Regards,  
**Katie Blot**  
Chief Strategy Officer

## Blackboard®

At Blackboard, we’re shaping the future of education with big ideas that are transforming the landscape. Every day we help millions of people around the world find new ways to learn, connect and advance. With innovative technologies and solutions we bring them closer to the knowledge they seek and the potential they can achieve. Blackboard is the leading provider of learner success-focused technology solutions and services to the education market. We help our clients overcome diverse and complex challenges through our broad portfolio of solutions and services that make education more accessible, engaging and relevant to the modern day learner.

# INTRODUCTION

We've spoken with 20 educational leaders to learn more about how institutions tap technology to improve education and make it available for all students, including those with differing abilities. We asked them the following question:

***Please share a specific story (or perspective) about how you or your institution used technology to provide greater access to students with specific needs (e.g., physical disability, location, or inability to get to campus.) What key piece of advice can you offer to someone else trying to implement your approach?***

A generous partnership with Blackboard makes it possible for us to share with you experiences that institutions have had implementing these technologies, how they've worked to overcome problems, and the outcomes they've seen from those efforts.

These experts offer their perspectives on challenges, successes, and lessons learned. They discuss everything from design and development strategies to the changing role of higher education and educators. Most of these professionals agree that when you expand availability to education by using accessible technology, whether it is video captioning, text to speech, or more advanced technologies, even students who don't identify as having disabilities use these services and that they increase student success rates and improve learning overall.

I trust you'll find these experts' successes and advice useful and that after reading this, you'll have solid strategies to help advance your use of technology to broaden access to education for all students.



All the best,  
**David Rogelberg**  
Publisher



**Mighty Guides make you stronger.**

These authoritative and diverse guides provide a full view of a topic. They help you explore, compare, and contrast a variety of viewpoints so that you can determine what will work best for you. Reading a Mighty Guide is kind of like having your own team of experts. Each heartfelt and sincere piece of advice in this guide sits right next to the contributor's name, biography, and links so that you can learn more about their work. This background information gives you the proper context for each expert's independent perspective.

Credible advice from top experts helps you make strong decisions. Strong decisions make you mighty.

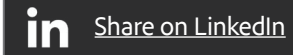
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**DAVE  
BOLMAN**

Provost,  
University of Advancing  
Technology

Provost Bolman has focused his career upon addressing the profound need within Arizona and the nation for a substantial and diverse creative class workforce. As its long standing provost Dr. Bolman has built the University of Advancing Technology (UAT) into a unique all-STEM institution that marries the best of traditional small private college learning with the genetics of innovation that come with agile technology organizations.



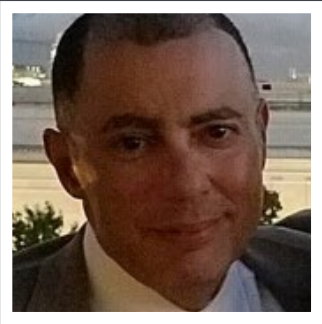
*The fact that technology isn't something exclusive or difficult means that students leave a bachelor's degree program with behaviors associated with master's degree programs.*



Students need not sacrifice meaningful interaction with their instructors or peers just because they have a disability. By employing the Agile processes software developers have pioneered, colleges and universities can drastically lower barriers to access for students who have disabilities.



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## STEVEN D'AGUSTINO

Director of Online Learning,  
Fordham University

Steven D'Agustino holds a doctorate in Education Leadership Administration and Policy and is the director of Online Learning at Fordham University. He is the editor of several books, most recently *Creating Teacher Immediacy on Online Learning Environments*. His other publications include *Toward a Course Conversion Model for Distance Learning* and *Providing Innovative Opportunities and Options Through Online Credit Recovery and Afterschool Programs*. He has written several grants to give historically underserved populations access to technology.



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*What the online environment gives us is an opportunity to rethink these basic assumptions about teaching and learning.*



Personal technology—smartphones, the Internet—has to some extent destabilized the classical student–instructor paradigm. We all have equal access to knowledge, but education is about more than that. It's about finding ways to maintain student-to-student and student-to-instructor communications in nontraditional learning environments. That's why the right technology is so important.



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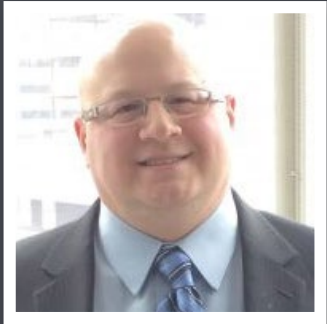
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*Amy Craton started working on her degree over 50 years ago, but life got in the way. At 94 years old, she set out to complete her degree program. She tried to attend classes at the local community college, but her hearing was deteriorating and she found it difficult to keep up. Online classes and materials helped Amy complete her degree at her own pace and from the comfort of her home.*



LinkedIn

**PAUL J. LEBLANC**  
President, Southern New Hampshire University



## JOHN VIVOLO

Director of Online and Virtual  
Learning,  
New York University

John Vivolo is director of Online and Virtual Learning for New York University (NYU). He partners with faculty to devise pedagogical and technical practices known as *best practices for online learning*. Working to create interactive learning experiences, John also researches new methods and technologies to incorporate into online learning. In addition, he coordinates efforts to scale up online learning at NYU and manages a team of instructional designers and technologists to help faculty create next-generation online learning.



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*Faculty are always the content experts, but the actual person who records video, records audio, creates content, and writes everything is increasingly the instructional designer.*



A college or university's faculty members are without doubt the experts in their field, but when designing courses for online, on-demand learning, they can benefit from partnerships with the institution's instructional designers and technology experts.



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## ALAN GREENBERG

Senior Analyst and Partner,  
Wainhouse Research

Alan D. Greenberg leads Wainhouse Research Learning and Talent Technologies practice, where he covers technologies used for distance and online education and e-learning. He has published reports, white papers, and research notes on many collaborative technologies and consulted on many statewide networks, consortia, and universities. He was a U.S. Distance Learning Association 2010 Outstanding Leadership Award Winner and holds an M.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.A. from Hampshire College.



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*It's imperative that schools trust the cloud or hosted services because they don't have the people power to run technology and they don't want to go through all these constant refreshes.*



Technology is hitting its stride in terms of helping educators address the needs of local and remote learners. That technology is evolving so quickly, however, that it's difficult for colleges and universities to keep up. Only through thorough planning, stakeholder inclusion, and possibly use of consultants can institutions create a technology environment that's right for them.



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*I use Moodle and Blackboard Collaborate to provide students across Virginia with opportunities to learn in a virtual educational setting. In a virtual learning environment, I am able to provide a more student-centered approach to best meet the learning preferences and needs of my students. To ensure student success, I provide a wide range of multimedia resources in formats organized visually in a color-coded Symbaloo webmix. Accessibility features are also provided to further support my visually and/or hearing impaired students.*

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## CHRISTI COLLINS

Teacher & Online Adjunct Instructor,  
Virginia Virtual Academy & The UVA WISE/CTE



## JOSEPH MONTCALMO

Director of Academic  
Technology and Instructional  
Design,  
The Peabody Institute of the  
Johns Hopkins University

Joseph Montcalmo has spent his career building, developing, and deploying educational content and collaborating with fellow educators. In his current role, he is involved in every aspect of academic technology, from online learning to classroom-based technology. He has created online learning business plans for multiple universities, has experience with learning space design, and is an online adjunct faculty member. Joseph has presented on such topics as effective collaboration, academic technology, and approaches to successful leadership.



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*Online education is infectious in its need for organization and best practices, and that infectiousness ends up permeating all the education in an institution when it's done right.*



Effective online learning isn't just an imitation of classroom learning: It must be created with specific goals in mind. In creating good online courses, educators are employing best practices and learning new techniques that they then naturally employ in their classrooms, as well. The result is more engaged students and a new way of teaching.



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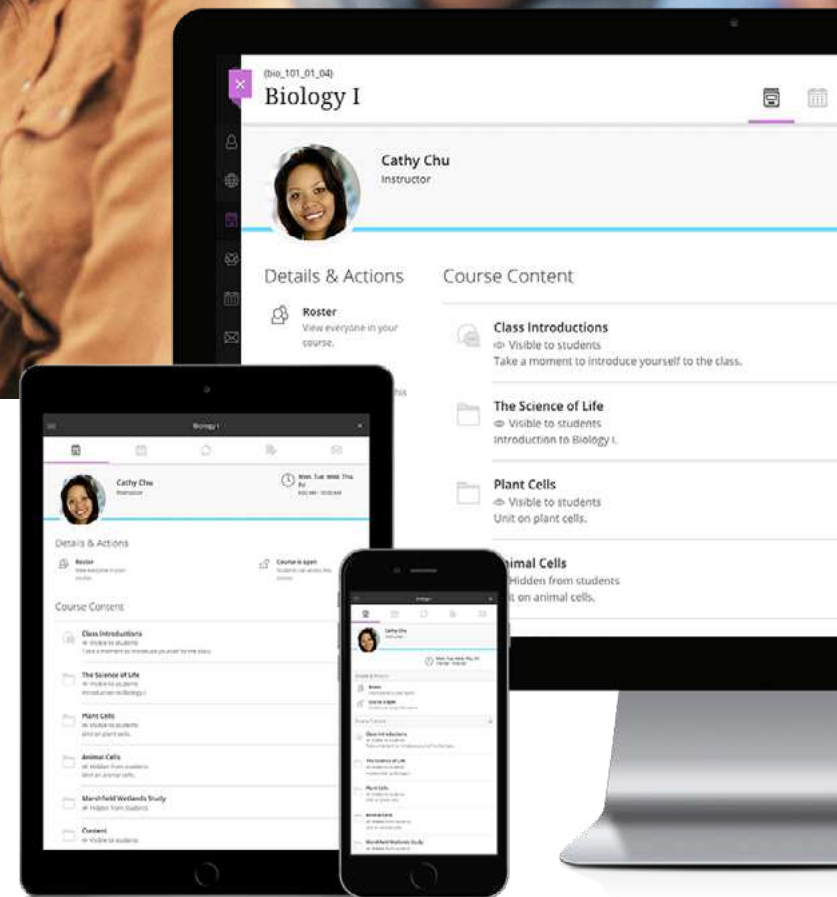
# Transforming education through innovative LMS technology

The Learning Management System has changed the way students and educators interact.

Blackboard Learn offers much more than simple, classroom interaction, it supports the entire education experience enabling educators to not only interact, but truly engage their students in learning.

**Flexible, efficient, complete: a new way to Learn.**

Test drive the latest Blackboard Learn



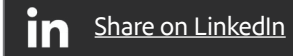
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## THOMAS MURRAY

**Director of Innovation,  
Future Ready Schools/Alliance  
for Excellent Education**

Tom Murray is the director of Innovation for Future Ready Schools, a project of the Alliance for Excellent Education. He has testified before the U.S. Congress and works alongside the U.S. Senate, the White House, and the U.S. Department of Education. Tom serves as a conference keynote speaker and was named one of “20 to Watch” by NSBA and Education Policy Person of the Year by the Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2015.



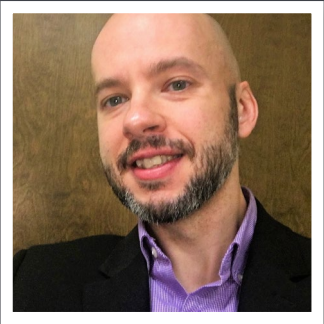
*When students can use technology to explore, design, and create, that's where the magic happens.*



Technology in the classroom is a great thing, but unless that technology furthers learning, teachers and their institutions won't achieve meaningful academic outcomes. When students use technology to explore, design, and create—that's when the magic happens.



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**KEITH  
HOELL**

Director of Online Education,  
Briarcliffe College

Keith Hoell is the director of Online Education and associate professor at Briarcliffe College in Long Island, New York. He is also an adjunct lecturer at St. Joseph's College and Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York, teaching in environments that use various learning management systems. Keith is a published author with John Wiley and Sons, having written two Microsoft Official Academic Curriculum textbooks on database management.



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*Engaging students is really important from a retention aspect and also helps drive students to take online classes. I don't think a student wants to take an online class just to post to a discussion board once a week.*



The challenge of technology in online higher education classes is ensuring that the online experience mirrors its classroom-based counterpart, both in accessibility and in requirements and rigor. To help make that possible, faculty and staff must have the troubleshooting skills necessary to ensure that students connect to courses and resources.



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*At Harvard Business School we are extending our mission to educate leaders by providing global audience access to our world-renowned faculty and their research. We are doing this using a custom-built online platform that fully utilizes a teaching method that Harvard Business School pioneered—the case method. By stepping into the shoes of real managers, students learn through discovery and comment, which is far more impactful than attending a traditional lecture class, whether online or in-person.*

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## PATRICK MULLANE

Executive Director, HBX, Harvard Business School



**LAUREN  
ERARDI**

**Director of Academic  
Technology,  
Quinnipiac University**

Lauren Erardi is the Director of Academic Technology at Quinnipiac University. She received her EdM in educational media and technology from Boston University and her BA in education and psychology from Middlebury College. Her professional responsibilities revolve around supporting, inspiring and collaborating with Quinnipiac faculty to integrate technology as a vital component of the teaching and learning process.



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*Lecture capture made it possible for our student to participate in the class and engage with the content from overseas.*



Lecture-capture technology in higher education classrooms allows students of all abilities, learning styles, and physical locations get the most from their college experience—on demand.



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**LARRY  
JOHNSON**

CEO/Founder,  
EdFutures

Dr. Larry Johnson is an acknowledged expert on emerging technology and its impacts on society and education. He is the author of more than 175 papers and reports and has delivered 225 keynote addresses to distinguished groups and organizations all over the world. CEO and founder of EdFutures.org, past CEO of the New Media Consortium, he also founded the Horizon Project and directed it for 15 years. In 2015, he was named one of the "Top 50 Influencers of Education in the Asia/Pacific Region."



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*The short answer to 'how should institutions be using technology to increase access to education' is 'every way they can'.*



How people learn and how they use technology is changing, and that change is having a tremendous influence on higher education. Colleges and universities are starting to see success from their efforts to expand access to education. Now, they must discover how to scale those successes for greater progress.



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*Due to many factors it has become increasingly difficult for students to attend college fairs or visit campus to learn about their postsecondary options. This is particularly true for first-generation and under-represented students. Virtual college fairs on CollegeWeekLive provide a free, easy opportunity for students, parents, and educators around the world to learn about colleges and universities from any internet-connected device. CollegeWeekLive has partnered with AVID, a global nonprofit which works with under-represented students, to coordinate a virtual college fair each semester for AVID elective students. During the three events so far, over 35,000 students have logged in to chat with college and university admissions counselors.*

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## CHARLIE BAIN

Manager of College Partnerships, CollegeWeekLive



## MARTHA KANTER

Executive Director of the  
College Promise Campaign and  
Senior Fellow, NYU; former U.S.  
Undersecretary of Education  
(2009–2013),  
New York University

Martha Kanter leads the College Promise Campaign, a national nonpartisan initiative to increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion in American higher education. She specializes in policy efforts to identify and apply innovative, evidence-based interventions; financing models; and behavioral incentives at the local, state, and national levels to raise high school and college graduation rates across the country.



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*Think through the technology goals with your institutional research and evaluation plan from the beginning. Design the educational strategy with technologies that enable student success.*



Perhaps the most important question in higher education today is, How do we help *all* our students find success and complete their degree? With the right technology and tools, colleges and universities can build a pathway to success for students regardless of ability and needs.



Want to read more?

[Download the full e-book free >](#)

# Better collaboration for more effective learning



Today's learners want new ways to engage and collaborate.

Virtual classrooms and online professional development deliver new opportunities to meet your learners where they are.

**Inspire and engage your learners with the easy to use Blackboard Collaborate.**

Try it free for 30 days



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## RAY HENDERSON

Founder,  
Lessons Learned Ventures,  
LLC

Ray Henderson is an educational technology entrepreneur, strategic advisor, and seed state investor. As an operating executive, he helped conceive and launch several of the most recognized products in the education technology market. He's an evangelist for open technology standards, including Common Cartridge and LTI. Today, he is developing promising young companies through Lessons Learned Ventures, LLC, a boutique ed tech investment and strategic advisory firm.



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*Section 508 had an immediate impact on product developers across the industry, and caused a lot of change in both product roadmaps and quality assurance programs.*



Making courses and course materials accessible to all students is a challenge for faculty. Fortunately, assistive technologies and machine learning are coming to the rescue. Software can review course content authored into LMS platforms and produce custom reports to the instructor about where they can improve the content for accessibility. Learning management systems have come a long way, and now they're moving into a new frontier.



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*College students with full-time jobs and distance learners who are unable to attend a physical campus benefit from being able to strengthen their knowledge or review core concepts from their home, during their commute, or between shifts at work. A mobile-optimized learning platform helps learners carry their courseware in the palm of their hand, and using W3C-WAI guidelines helps make learning platforms accessible to all students. Meeting students where they are is the best way to empower their education.*

[Twitter](#)[Website](#)[Blog](#)[LinkedIn](#)

ANDREW SMITH  
LEWIS

Co-Founder & CEO, Cerego



## KOREY SINGLETON

Assitive Technology  
Initiative Manager,  
George Mason University

Korey Singleton is manager of the Assitive Technology Initiative (ATI) for George Mason University (GMU). The ATI is tasked with guiding and implementing a university-wide strategy for addressing the electronic and IT accessibility needs of GMU students, staff, and faculty. For more than 20 years, he has been an advocate for the accessibility and assitive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in K-12, higher education, and state and local government.



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*We essentially make sure that students with disabilities here at George Mason University have equivalent access to all the technology resources used at the school.*



Many university students don't consider themselves disabled, even though they know they need additional help in their classes. For this reason, broadly deploying assitive technology can ensure success for students and universities alike.



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**KAREN  
RUBENSTEIN**

Director of Academic  
Technology Services,  
Morgan State University

Karen Rubenstein is the director of Academic Technology Services (ATS) at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. She and the ATS staff strive to enhance teaching and learning through the identification, evaluation, adoption, and integration of technology into online, hybrid, and traditional courses.



Website



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*Number one, make sure that you're not excluding any students from participating in your school because you can't accommodate their needs. It's the right thing to do.*



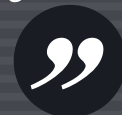
Compliance with equal-access legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act is more than just the law: It's the right thing to do. No student—or staff member—should be left out simply because the college or university couldn't accommodate their needs. This quest for equal access should start with an assessment of the technology the institution is already using.



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*While working at a school in NYC for students with language-based learning disabilities, I saw the true power of technology. The school provided access to a wide variety of digital tools to help the teachers teach and the students learn. These were simple things like a microphone that enabled an incredible History teacher to read and record the entire textbook and transfer the audio to the students' iPods so they could listen along while reading. Video cameras and editing software made it possible for severely dyslexic readers to embrace the language of film and create wonderful short movies based on their understanding of the texts we were reading. Technology access is the gateway to knowledge and a key tool in unlocking the potential creativity in all learners.*

[Twitter](#)[Website](#)[Blog](#)

## ADAM BELLOW

Co-Founder, Breakout EDU



## KRISTA GREEAR

Assistant Director,  
Disability Resources  
for Students,  
University of Washington

Krista Greear's drive to help students and love of technology and data make her a great fit for her position managing the Access Text & Technology program and Captioning program for all 3 University of Washington (UW) campuses. She has served in higher education disability services, providing students with alternate text, since 2007, with four years as a part-time employee at Central Washington University and the rest as a full-time employee at UW.



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*What I love is that essentially, technology is being created for students or end users who have disabilities, but it benefits everyone.*

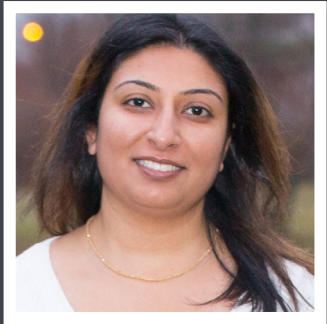


Sometimes, accessibility is as simple as providing content in multiple formats so that students can choose the media that make it easiest for them to learn. In the longer term, however, true technology-facilitated accessibility will require a partnership among subject matter experts, experts on learning disabilities, instructional designers, and IT staff.



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**MONICA  
YATSYLA**

**Manager of Instructional  
Design Services,  
Hofstra University**

Monica Yatsyla is the manager of Instructional Design Services at Hofstra University. She focuses on trending teaching techniques and academic tools. Her team of instructional designers conducts faculty workshops and one-on-one faculty consultation on technology and pedagogy to engage students in the learning process as well as increase instructor efficiency. Monica and her team help faculty develop courseware to enhance content while incorporating hybrid, online, and flipped instruction teaching models into their current practices.



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*Why don't we roll this technology into a classroom so that students whose illness or disability physically prevents them from attending class can still participate?*



Colleges and universities want to be inclusive and proactive in accommodating students with disabilities. A new technology called *double robotics* may be the key to their success. A robot with attached iPad allows students who can't be in the classroom take part as though they were, making meaningful education opportunities available to all.



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*In my university classes, I always tell my preservice teachers that as practicing teachers “they will move mountains.” With use of technology and dedication to providing access no matter what barriers we face, they exemplified this by helping videoconference in one of our students who was ill and needing to travel for treatment. Though separated by distance, she was able to be a part of our experience and our community, and, in turn, model how learning should be within reach of all students.*

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# JENNIFER WILLIAMS

Professor, Saint Leo University

# Making course content more accessible

Blackboard Ally is a revolutionary product that focuses on making digital course content more accessible.



**Using inclusivity, sustainability and automation as its key pillars, Blackboard Ally helps you understand and tackle accessibility in a way that benefits all students.**

Keep up-to-date on Ally's release



**Blackboard®**



**SHERYL  
BURGSTAHLER**  
Director of Accessible  
Technology Services,  
University of Washington

Dr. Sheryl Burgstahler founded and directs the Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology Center and the Access Technology Center at University of Washington. These centers promote the use of technology and other interventions to support the success of students with disabilities in postsecondary education and careers and the development of facilities, software, websites, multimedia, and online learning programs that are welcoming and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Sheryl is the editor and lead author of the book *Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice*.



Website



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*I apply UD (universal design) strategies to make the courses accessible to people who have disabilities. Even if I don't have any of those students in my class, I'm ready for them.*



Educational institutions, from universities to kindergartens, must design courses with accessibility in mind to accommodate all students. By using universal design strategies in that process, institutions can improve the learning experience for all students—those with and without disabilities.



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**KARA  
ZIRKLE**

**Accessible Technology  
Specialist,  
Miami University**

Kara Zirkle has worked in accessibility for more than 16 years through positions in nonprofit, government, and higher education organizations. She has focused on assistive technology assessments; training (specifically, on Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 compliance); and developing accessibility infrastructure, including procurement, course accessibility (distance learning), and document and web accessibility. Kara has focused on higher education for the past 10 years, working at George Mason University before moving to Miami University in Ohio.



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*The procurement perspective is a good line in the sand. It gives you a timeframe to start ensuring capabilities for accessibility or working accessibility into contracts.*



Time, resource, and budget constraints make building accessibility into courses difficult. By planning for accessibility at the onset—during procurement discussions—universities can see returns on their technology investment much greater than they can anticipate.



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## DEVIRIM OZDEMIR

Instructional Design  
Coordinator,  
Des Moines University

Dr. Devrim Ozdemir is an experienced scholar in the field of instructional design and technology. His work focuses on the development and improvement of competency-based graduate professional degree programs. He works one on one and collectively with faculty to develop courses, using learning analytics and big data to help the degree programs assess student learning and competency.



Website



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*[Good instructional design] doesn't only help those who have disabilities but is also a win–win situation for the instructor.*



To see the maximum benefit from assistive technologies in higher education, a team approach is required. No longer is curriculum design something the instructor handles alone, then turns over to another group to add accessibility features. When accessibility is part of instructional design, everyone wins.



Want to read more?

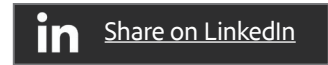
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**KEVIN  
DALIN**

**Consultant and Rehabilitation  
Technology Specialist,  
Tech4Impact**

Kevin Dalin founded Tech4Impact, an Iowa Targeted Small Business, to provide services that make life accessible, such as assistive technology, training, and digital presence. He earned a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling at Drake University and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Milwaukee School of Engineering. He is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and active in the advocacy community, participating on Iowa's Statewide Independent Living Council and the Iowa Olmstead Consumer Taskforce.



*Technology features and hardware are perpetually being updated... Therefore, a plan for continuing education through conferences and/or webinars should be developed for key staff.*



As more individuals with disabilities seek higher education, providing coursework in as many different modalities and in the most accessible way possible becomes even more important. This includes integrating technology and/or assistive technology into the classroom as well as integrating ideas from Universal Design.



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## MICHAEL LAMPE

Instructional Design  
Specialist,  
University of South Carolina  
Upstate

Michael Lampe is an instructional design specialist at USC Upstate's Department of Learning Technologies where he has worked on projects that encourage active learning classroom design, redesign online teaching certification courses and initiate discussion on gaming in higher education. He is also an adjunct faculty member for USC Upstate's School of Education, teaching an educational technology course. Michael has a Master's in Education from Marquette University and is currently pursuing his Doctorate of Education at USC focusing on Educational Technology.



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*Assessments help you make informed decisions so that you can create a better classroom the next time around.*



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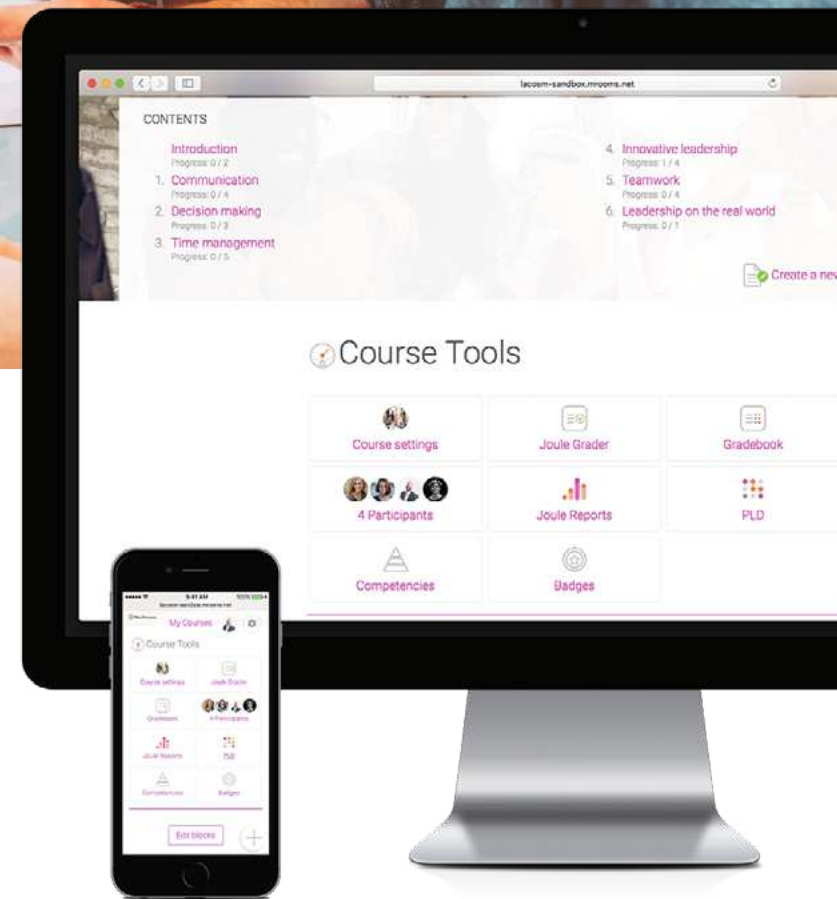
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