

Hi and welcome to the session.

We're going to be exploring
the Maturity Model for higher education.

In this session, its going to
also include some participation.

I'm really excited to be able to share with
you and walk you through
the four different stages that we're seeing
in terms of where universities fall,
in their accessibility and inclusivity initiatives.

Now, just a reminder,
the session is meant to be interactive.

So as we come to the questions for you to answer,
please write down your answers.

Let's take a look at the agenda.

First of all, we're going to take a look
at the definition of the Maturity Model.

What's always included in this Maturity Model?

Second, we're going to take a journey.

Were going to go with Palmer, a student,
that is experiencing what life
is like as a student going through the emerging,
the applying, the infusing,
and the incorporating stages of the Maturity Model.

First of all, let's take a look at the definition.

The Maturity Model is developed to communicate and
categorize access within a higher education institution,

as defined by the stages.

The stages are based on the culture and operational practice throughout the institution in providing their students and employees access.

This model primarily focuses on live and post-production captioning, but could apply to other access needs in the institution's environment.

Within the model, you'll see four stages, emerging, applying, infusing, and incorporating.

Let's first segment the model between reactive and proactive.

The first two stages, emerging and applying, are reactive.

With both stages, the institution is reacting to the needs of the students who have disclosed their disability to the office of Disability Support Services at their institution.

The next two stages, infusing and incorporating, is where the institution is proactive and creating access based on an inclusive approach, for all students, not just the needs of students who have disclosed their disability.

To break this down a bit further, with infusing, the institution is being proactive

within the classroom environment.

With incorporating, the institution has been proactive throughout the entire student lifecycle, including all events and activities at the institution.

Now that we've established a high level understanding of the model, I'd like to take us on a journey with Palmer and her quest for education.

The goal of sharing this journey, is to illustrate the various stages of the model with a day in the life of Palmer, and the institution she attends.

Palmer is an incoming freshmen who is deaf, and has disclosed her disability to the office of Disabilities Supports Services or commonly referred to as DSS on campus.

DSS sent a letter to all of Palmer's instructors, informing them of the need for captioning of any video content, any transcript for any audio content used in her fall classes.

On Monday, in Palmer's Western Civ course, the instructor shows a video on the Middle Ages, that is not captioned.

Palmer goes to the instructor, and asks about the video.

The instructor gives Palmer

an extension on the assignment,
until she is able to get the video captioned.

On the next day, Tuesday,
Palmer goes to DSS and informs them of the video,
so they can get it captioned.

DSS contacts the instructor,
and on Wednesday, attains access to video.

They send it off to be captured
with a three-day turnaround.

While in class on Wednesday,
the instructor continues to
lecture about the Middle Ages,
and references information shared
on the video shown on Monday.

In a collaborative exercise,
the students are required to discuss the Middle Ages,
including the content referenced on the video.

Palmer is lost in this discussion,
since she has yet to have
the chance to watch the video with captions.

Now, on Friday in class,
the instructor moves on to
the renaissance and reformation period,
is no longer lecturing or discussing the Middle Ages.

On Monday afternoon,
a week after the class viewed the video,
DSS receives the captioned video.

They send Palmer an e-mail,
letting her know that the video
is now available for her to view.

While earlier in class,
the instructor showed a video on
the renaissance period that was not captioned.

The university realized that their approach has
characterized them in the emerging stage
on the Maturity Model.

The institution is responding to
the individual request made by a student,
that has a registered disability with DSS.

Let's take a look at a couple of questions.

First question, do you see
a similar emerging process
happening at your institution?

Yes or no?

The second question,
is the institution meeting the letter of law
in providing accommodations to Palmer?

Well, I'm not an attorney,
and I don't provide legal advice,
but, some would say,
for the most part, yes.

One might argue that Palmer is
not experiencing inequitable education,
but many would argue that she's being accommodated.

But, is this really the right question?

Some points to consider about the emerging stage.

How can Palmer possibly

succeed with this approach in process?

How long before Palmer stops asking for

accommodations and just drops out altogether?

Palmer is unable to benefit from peer-to-peer learning,

and the captioning video

is only made available to Palmer.

There are others in the class that could also

benefit from the captioning.

The university came to

the realization that their approach has

characterized them in the emerging stage

on the Maturity Model,

and it was not working well for

the success of the students.

If the institution continued with this process,

students like Palmer would be failing or dropping out.

Not to mention the difficulty of DSS

trying to plan their work schedules,

and forecast their budgets in this reactionary state.

The university decide they

needed to take the steps to move

to the next stage of the model, the applying stage.

Palmer returns spring semester

and the institution has transitioned

to the applying stage on the Maturity Model.

Palmer's experience is very

different than for her fall semester.

The reason is due to what took place

prior to the start of the semester.

So what changed?

Well, first of all,

departments within the institution came

together and partnered in the ownership of accessibility.

No longer was it the sole ownership of DSS.

Faculty, instructional designers,

and the learning specialists from DSS came

together and put in place a plan for

Palmer's access to her course content.

That plan went like this.

Earlier in the first semester,

DSS obtained a list of

the next semester courses that students had enrolled in.

This was specifically for the students

who had registered with DSS.

This information is typically

available in early November.

In addition to sending

a letter as they had done in the past,

they met with each instructor.

During this meeting, they went over the syllabus

content that was going to be used

throughout the course during the next semester.

The DSS learning specialist

and the instructional designer,

identified the content items that would need to be

captioned and sent those items off for captioning,

prior to the start of the semester.

They were also aware that there would always be items

introduced throughout the semester that

may require immediate attention.

But the majority of the content would be accessible.

Now, in Palmer's spring semester courses,

she's able to have

an equitable engagement with our content,

as long as the course schedule didn't change.

If she decides that her schedule

needs to be adjusted during the add drop period,

there maybe a delay in captioning

in any new course content.

With the institution's new processes,

they're still providing the caption versions

only to Palmer, as an accommodation.

So let's look at a couple of more questions.

Do you encounter a similar applying

process at your institution?

Yes or no?

Will the caption version

of this content benefit other students?

Well, my answer to number 2 would be yes.

Students who are English is a second language and benefit from being able to also read what is being said.

Also, students trying to understand instructors who have an accent or rather than just hearing specific terminology being used, their ability to see how a word is spelled.

This enhances recognition of the term when being assessed.

Some points to consider about the infusing stage are, Palmer is able to engage with course content in equitable way, compared to her classmates.

The majority of work required from the instructors and DSS in preparing the content occurs prior to the start of the semester, and can therefore be planned for.

The captioned content is still only made available to Palmer.

So as Palmer was able to engage with the content at the same as her classmates, she was able to engage in discussions.

Her classmates started asking the instructor if they could have access to caption version.

They saw that the captioning was providing the content in a way that helped them to also better understand and retain the information.

Rather than just hearing what was said, students were able to read and see how the terms were spelled.

It also helped her classmates whose first language was not English.

The students in Palmer's classes went to the student government association and told the president that they also needed access to the captioned content items.

It would be to the universities' best interests for all students to have this access.

The student government association approached the vice-president of students success and the provost, sharing their experience and leadership agreed to a pilot.

The pilot was to evaluate the impact on student engagement, grades, and satisfaction.

These are all significant indicators to be measured in all courses.

The university selected the courses Palmer and other students needing content captioned had already enrolled in, as the pilot courses.

Over the summer,

all video and audio content were captioned,
replacing the non-captioned content.

This provided access to the captioned content
to all students in these courses.

The historical metrics on the key indicators
for these courses were collected,
benchmarking the pilot study.

In the syllabus of these courses,
a section was added explaining how
the students had this feature available to them.

Throughout the fall semester,
data was collected,
and a students survey was administered
at both midterm and at the final.

This survey asked the students
if they used the captioning,
and the value they received from using the captioning.

The results were consistent in all the selected courses.

Grades, engagement, and students satisfaction
increased in all these courses.

Captions were no longer considered an accommodation,
but rather as a learning feature.

While decision was made that all video and
audio course content created would be captioned,
there was still a cultural shift that was
taking place within the university.

A change management plan focused on

inclusion and learning preferences went into effect, communicating to all faculty and staff the pilot results.

Town hall lectures were given by the faculty members in the pilot to their colleagues, demonstrating the impact they experienced with their students.

Other faculty started to own and advocate for the access of their course content for all students.

Next set of questions.

The first question is, do you see a similar infusing process at your institution?

Yes or no?

The second question is, what would be required for your institution to progress to the infusing stage if you're not already there?

The university now had the research to demonstrate that becoming proactive would be a good investment throughout all their courses, and decided to make the move to the next level on the Maturity Model, infusing.

As the university culture valued inclusion, individuals assume the ownership of access.

This value quickly grew beyond the classroom.

Leadership and staff started realizing the value of inclusion in all areas of the student involvement.

Events that were open to the student body and other such as theater performances, sporting events, all assemblies by the university president and deans, as well as commencement needed live captioning.

Content on digital signage in all buildings needed captions.

Their website and social media content needed captions.

As a natural progression of growth, the university now found themselves moving to the final stage in the Maturity Model, incorporating.

It was an expectation throughout the university that all video, audio, and live events would include captions and transcription.

So let's take a look at the last two questions that we have.

The first one is, do you see a similar incorporating process at your institution?

Yes or no?

The second question is, what would be required for your institution to make this cultural shift, if you're not there already?

I always like to go back to our physical environment when I'd share about access.

I'm pretty sure that everyone here

would agree that this student sitting outside the library in his wheelchair facing the stairs should not be required to first disclose a disability and then wait for a ramp to be built in order to gain access to this building.

Wouldn't you agree that the building should be designed or retrofitted with a ramp for access?

But yet, in the digital environment, oftentimes we expect a student to first disclose and then wait for remediated version of the content, so they can access the content.

Sixty to eighty percent of undergraduate students on your campus who have a disability are not disclosing the disability to the institution.

As a result, those students are trying to navigate the access barriers on their own, and are struggling to succeed.

You might ask, why such a high percentage?

Well, there's several reasons.

But the bottom line is, if those barriers were simply removed, all students would be able to focus on the content rather than navigating the barriers.

How many of us have pushed a stroller, pulled luggage, or navigated a cart up a ramp rather than lifting it up the stairs?

We've all benefited from a ramp.

The same is true when our education content and activities are also accessible.

How many of us have watched captions in a restaurant, or at an airport, on our phone with social media, or at night at home watching Netflix?

We can make captioning a learning feature for all rather than an accommodation feature for a few.

If you'd like some additional information about the Maturity Model and how the Maturity Model would fit into your institution, please feel free to reach out to me, and I'd be more than glad to meet with you and to discuss where your institution is.

My email address is Scott@Verbit.ai.

Thank you for joining and participating in this, and I look forward to being able to connect with you, and take a look at how your school is moving along this journey.