

Fostering Digital Accessibility Awareness in EAP Materials Design: A Collaborative Approach

Ella Ballinger, King's Foundations
ella.1.ballinger@kcl.ac.uk

Amy Aisha Brown, UoP London
amy_aisha.brown@port.ac.uk

KING'S
College
LONDON



Overview

1

- **Digital Accessibility:** What it is and how it fits into EAP and King's Foundations

2

- **Initiatives:** What we tried

3

- **Reflections:** What went well and what the challenges were

4

- **Plans and recommendations:** What's in the pipeline and what's needed

5

- **Takeaways:** What you've got to share!

What you'll need to do!

On the Padlet, please add any (or all) of the following:

- Takeaways
- Advice
- Resources
- Questions



https://uop.padlet.org/amy_aishabrown1/Digital_Accessibility_EAP

Digital Accessibility



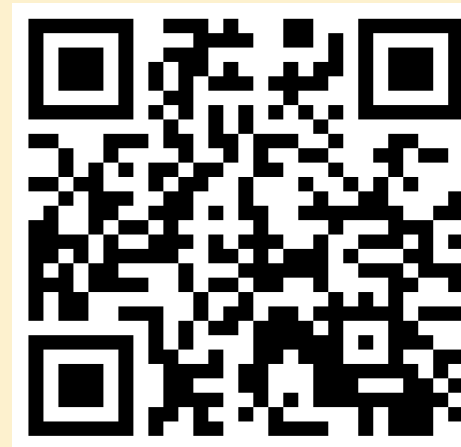
Digital Accessibility: What is it?

Definition (GOV.UK, 2018)

- Making sure websites, apps, and their content can be used by as many people as possible, including those with disabilities.

Examples

- Using heading styles.
- Adding ALT text to images.
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast.
- Providing transcripts and captions.



Digital Accessibility: Why's it relevant?

Legal argument

- The Equality Act 2010 and Accessibility Regulations 2018 make basic digital accessibility a requirement.

Inclusivity argument

- Around 20% of students (25% for UK, 6% for non-UK) have a known disability (HESA, 2024).

Pedagogical (UDL) argument

- Accessibility strengthens learning opportunities for *all* (CAST, 2024).

Digital accessibility in EAP materials

- Font styling, colour, layout, etc are used to convey linguistic information.
- Present challenges to digital accessibility (see examples).

Example 1

Many people these days believe that climate change is real. There is plenty to suggest this. Mariah Jones writes in The Punter that climate change is a scientific fact (2015: 245). Scientists have been collecting data on the changing climate for years (Climate News 2003; SALG 2014). Data shows that temperatures have warmed faster more recently (2016: 5) and storms and floods have increased in frequency (Widley 2016: 12). Others argue that the climate has always been changing and that this is nothing new (Peterson 2015; Smith 2013). These views, however, mask the link between climate change denial and the negative effects of capitalism. Addressing climate change involves radical change to reduce carbon emissions, which can be costly for corporations (Bones 2016). In the case of the energy giants, addressing climate change may even threaten their whole existence. Therefore whether or not climate change is real is a political as well as a geological question.

Red – topic sentence or sentence introducing the idea of the paragraph

Blue – bringing together a range of points from different scholars on the same issue

Purple – student’s critical commentary on the different points made

Green – closing comment to round off paragraph

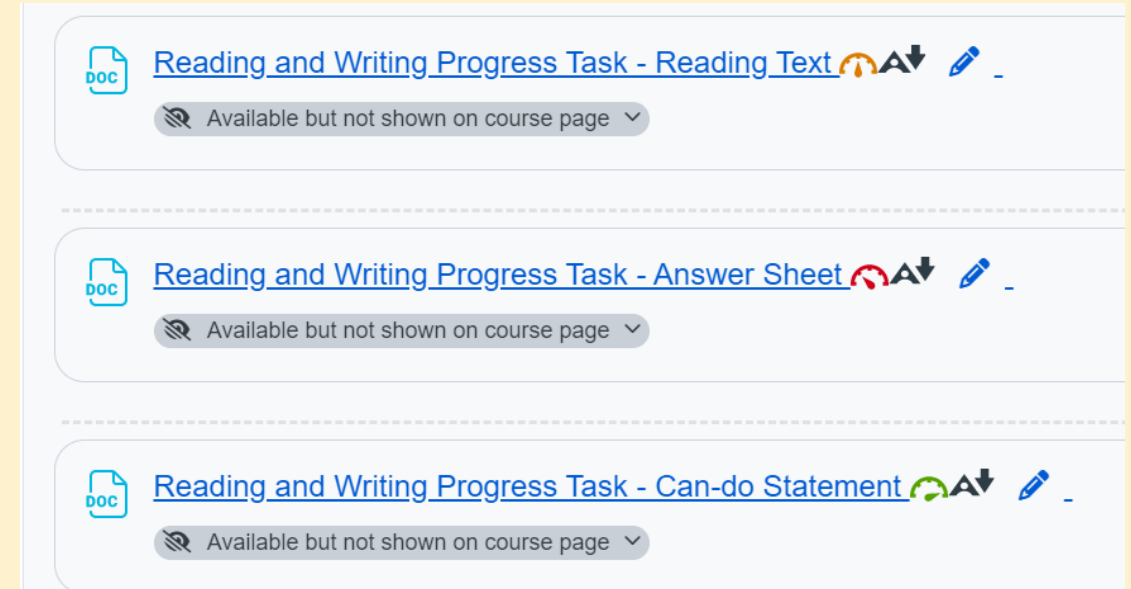
Example 2

According to X (2000, p.115) ...		
As X (2000, p.115)	states/points out/suggests	, ...
X (2000, p.115)		that...
X (2000, p.115)	defines Y as ...	
...	(X, 2000, p.115).	

- No known EAP-specific guidelines.

Digital accessibility in King's Foundations (early 2023)

- Inconsistency in how linguistic elements were identified.
- Basic accessibility issues noticed on KEATS (VLE).
 - Red and amber Ally indicators.
 - Documents with accessibility issues.
 - Text in images, including in H5Ps.
- General lack of awareness of the what, why, and how of digital accessibility.
- No plans in place to address the gap.



Low (0-36%)



Medium (34-66%)



High (67-99%)



Perfect (100%)

Initiatives

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Team initiatives

Training and guidance

- Digital accessibility basics (all staff)
- Ally (staff who edit KEATS)

Team upskilling

Building accessibility into planning and QA processes

Raising issues at the Dept. Education Committee

Creating a dialogue around digital accessibility.



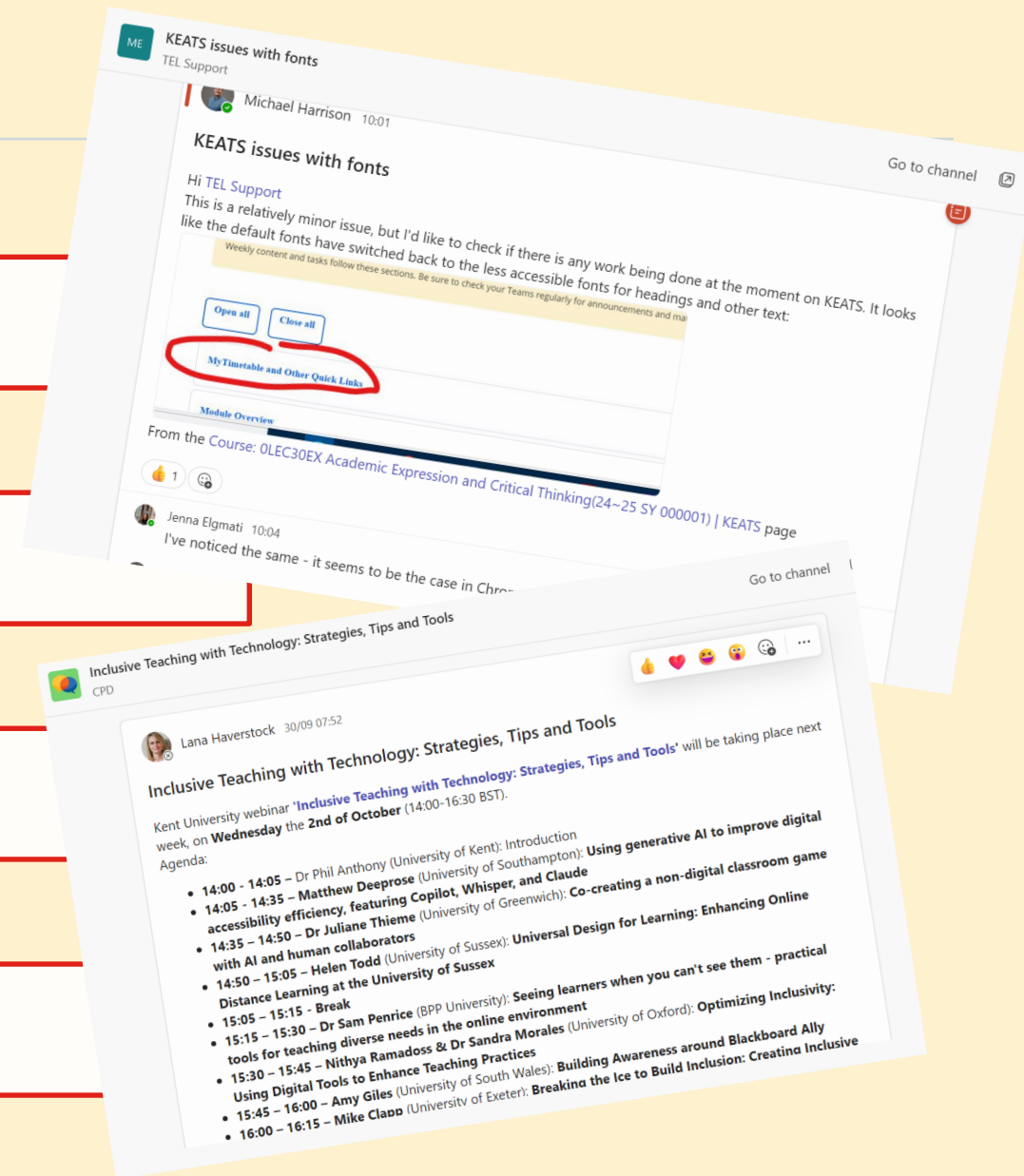
Teaching staff initiatives

Module leads and teaching team engagement

Tutor led Pre-sessional accessibility project

Ella's induction workshop

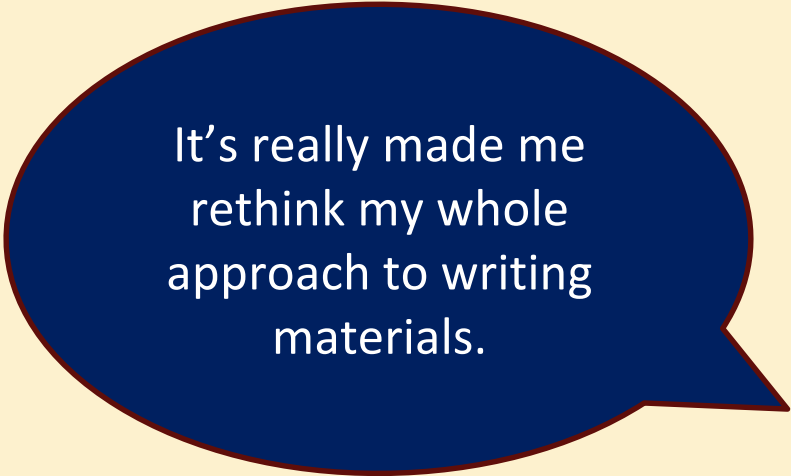
Teaching team sharing CPD opportunities



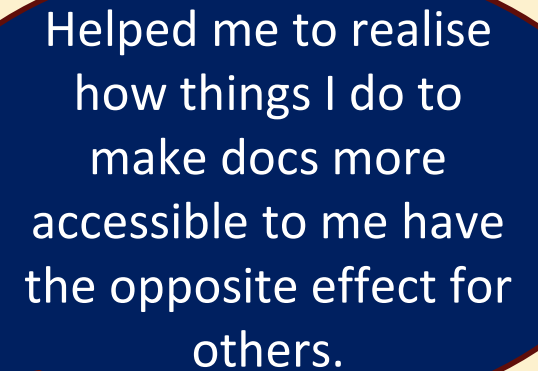
Reflections

What's gone well

- **Training:**
 - 2023/24: 100% positive feedback.
- **Buy-in from senior leadership:** Creating time for training
- **Cultural shift:** It's being discussed!
- **Leadership shift:** From TEL-driven to teacher-driven.
- **Shifts in accessibility**
 - KIF: Accessible assessment templates.
 - Pre-sessional: Increase in Ally scores.

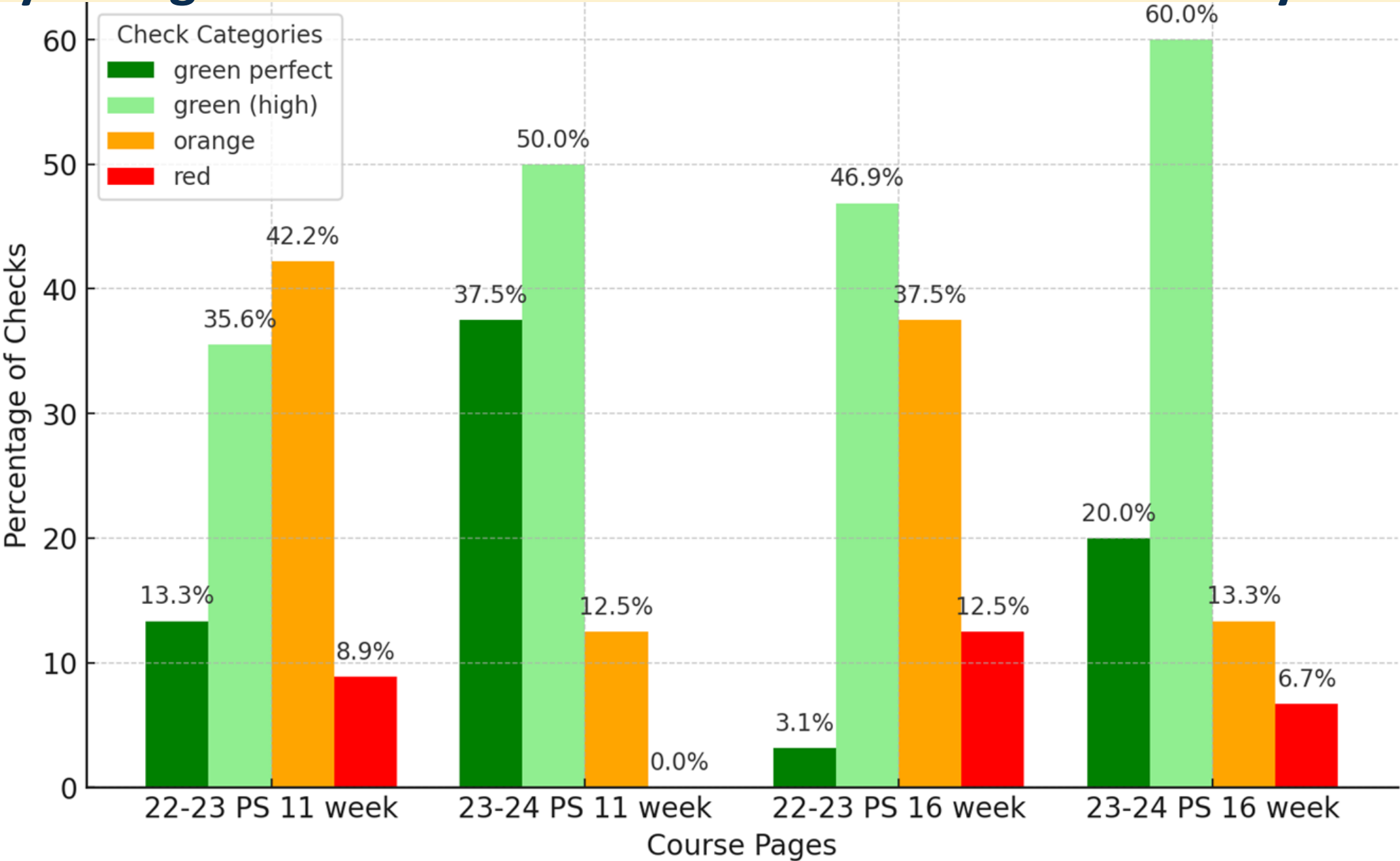


It's really made me rethink my whole approach to writing materials.

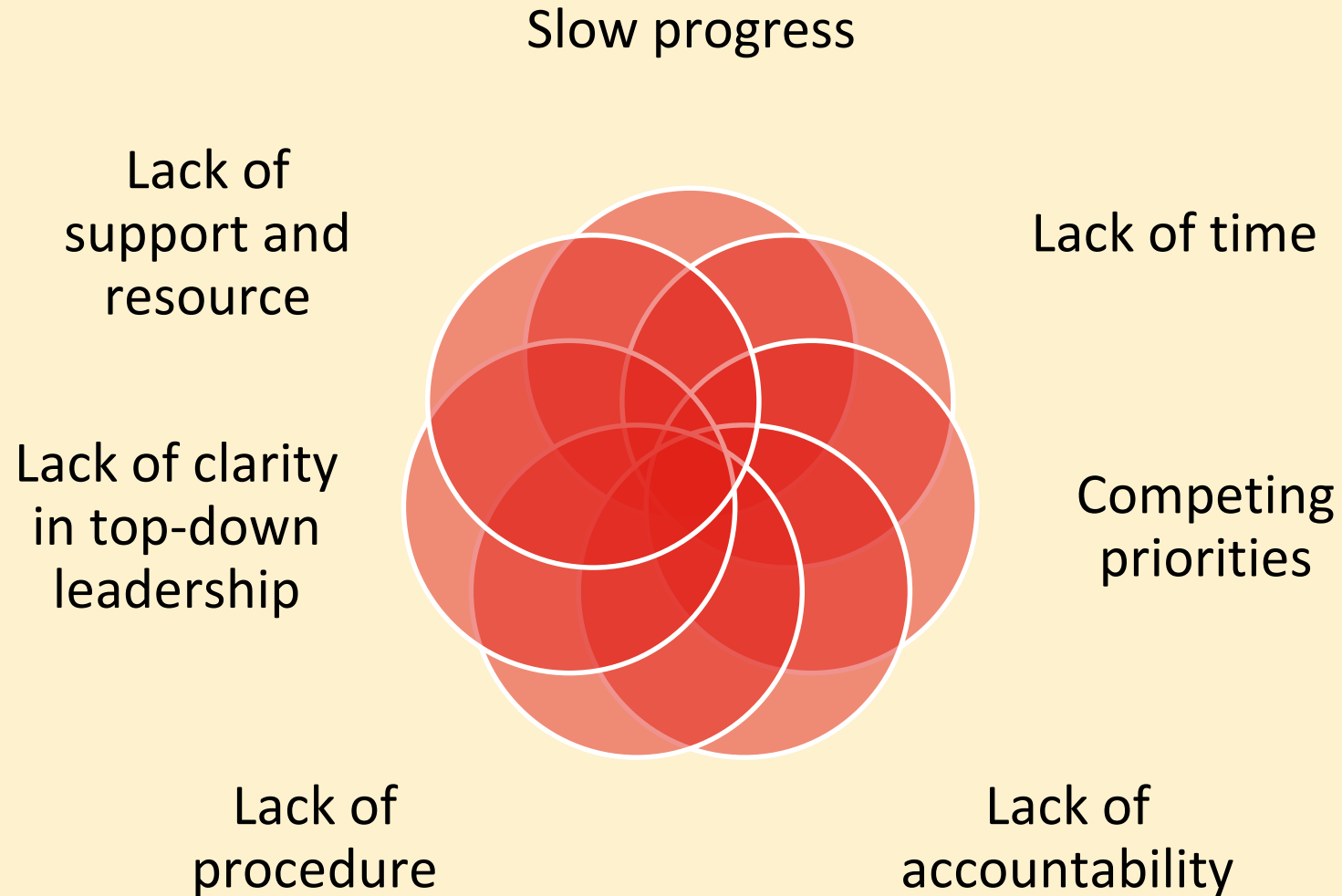


Helped me to realise how things I do to make docs more accessible to me have the opposite effect for others.

Ally ratings on two Pre-sessional sites in two academic years



Challenges



Possible solutions suggested by staff

More time.

Considering this in
our workload.

Perhaps some
official guidance
would be helpful.

Templates for
PowerPoint or
Word that are
accessible.

Someone
dedicated to this
task to consult
with.

Training in ...
accessibility for
Excel and KEATS.

A proofreader/
accessibility
checker.

Future plans and recommendations

What's in the pipeline



What's probably needed



Takeaways

Takeaways: Time to share!

On the Padlet, please add any (or all) of the following:

- Takeaways – points you feel most pertinent on accessibility
- Advice
- Resources
- Questions



https://uop.padlet.org/amy_aishabrown1/Digital_Accessibility_EAP

References

CAST (2024). [Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0.](#)

GOV.UK. (2018, September 12). [Accessibility requirements for public sector websites and apps.](#)

HESA. (2023). [Higher education student statistics: UK, 2022/23 - Student numbers and characteristics](#). Higher Education Statistics Agency.