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Making Accessibility Accessible: Engaging Instructors Empathetically

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Follow this and additional works at: http://pubs.lib.umn.edu/minnesota-elearning-summit
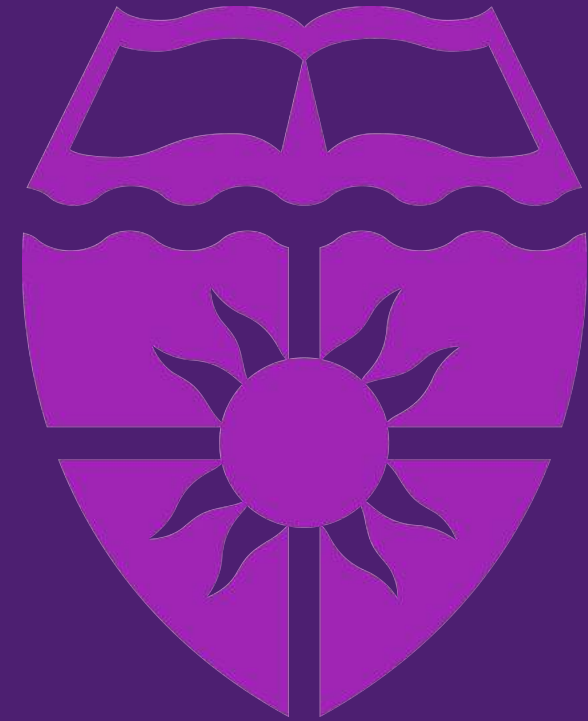
MAKING ACCESSIBILITY ACCESSIBLE
Engaging Instructors Empathetically

Cynthia Sarver, M.E.T, Ph.D., University of St. Thomas

Compliance. How is this relevant to me?

Dumbing things down

The technologists' job

I don't have time

Accessibility

All this work for maybe 1% of our students (maybe)

Job creep

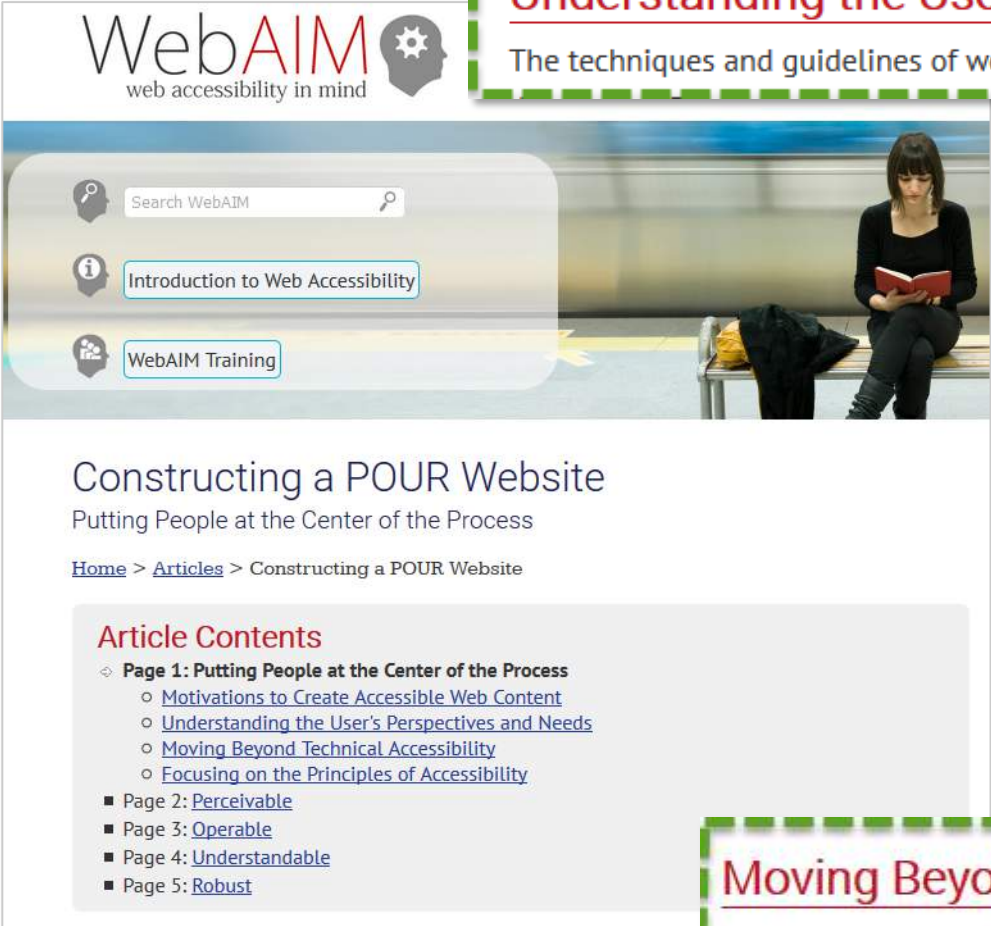**A list of (tedious) rules to follow**

Changing the conversation

A civil rights issue, not a compliance one

✓ Frame accessibility within context of inclusion, an ethic already existing at the university and to which most faculty are already committed to supporting.

But WCAG 2.0 Guidelines *are* User-Centered

Understanding the User's Perspective and Needs

The techniques and guidelines of web accessibility were not invented to make lif[...]

WebAIM
web accessibility in mind

Search WebAIM

Introduction to Web Accessibility

WebAIM Training

Constructing a POUR Website
Putting People at the Center of the Process

Home > Articles > Constructing a POUR Website

Article Contents
- Page 1: Putting People at the Center of the Process
  - Motivations to Create Accessible Web Content
  - Understanding the User's Perspectives and Needs
  - Moving Beyond Technical Accessibility
  - Focusing on the Principles of Accessibility
- Page 2: Perceivable
- Page 3: Operable
- Page 4: Understandable
- Page 5: Robust

Moving Beyond Technical Accessibility

Techniques and guidelines are important because they represent [...]

Situate within a Social Context

- ✓ Situated learning theory: Put material to be learned in authentic context (Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger, 1991)
- ✓ Build relationship and understanding where there may be none
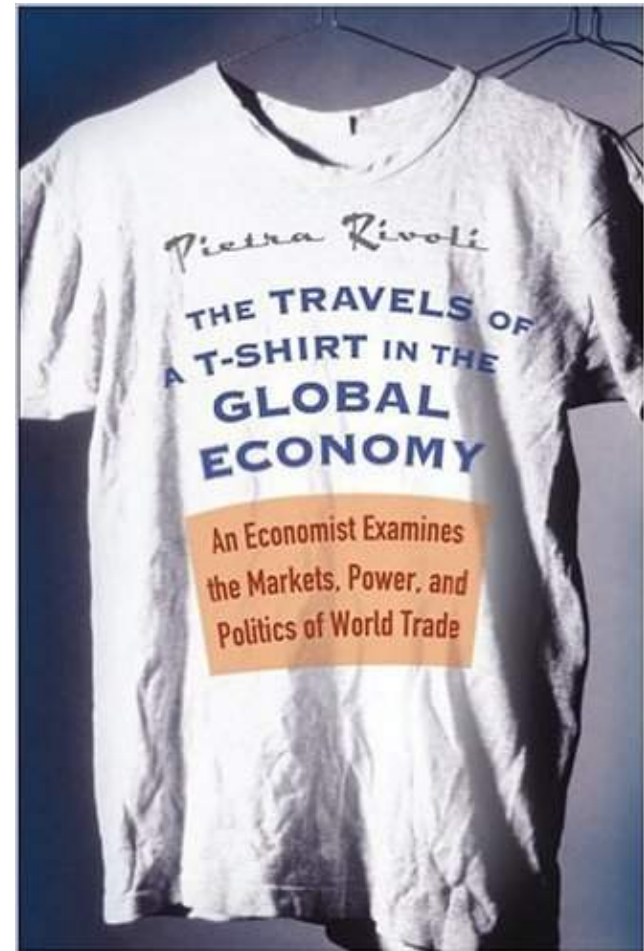- ✓ Build empathy

EMPATHY
The ability to walk in another person's shoes.

Humans are "hard-wired for empathy"

"With familiarity, other people become part of ourselves. Our self comes to include the people we feel close to."

-- Dr. James Coan, Psychology, University of Virginia (2013)

Pietra Rivoli

THE TRAVELS OF A T-SHIRT IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade

Making Course Content Accessible Using the RTF Toolbar

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How screen reader users access documents

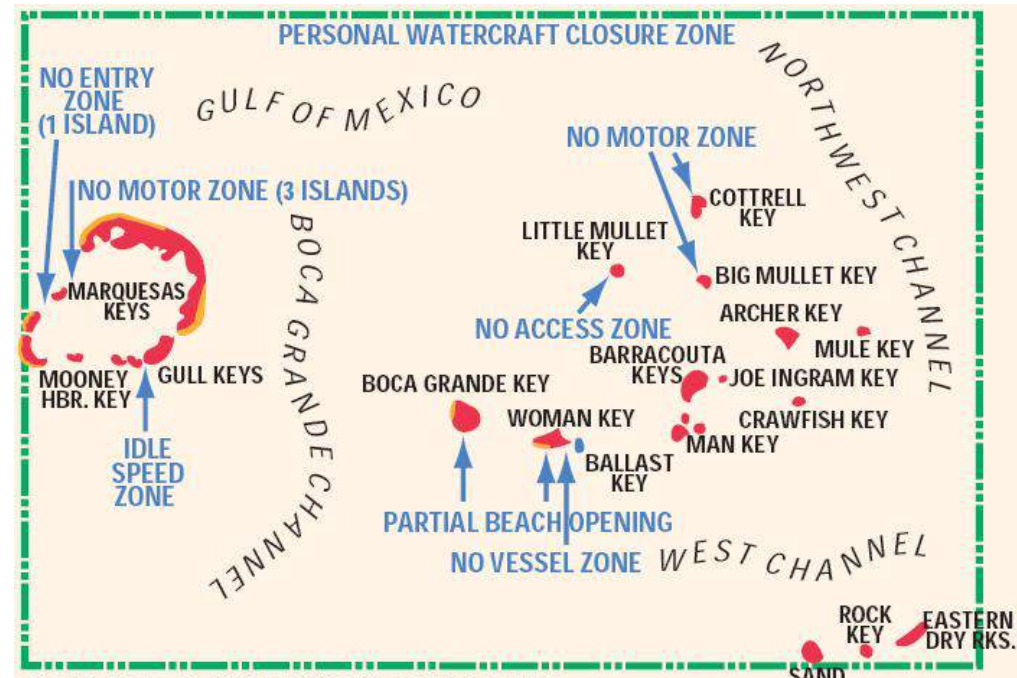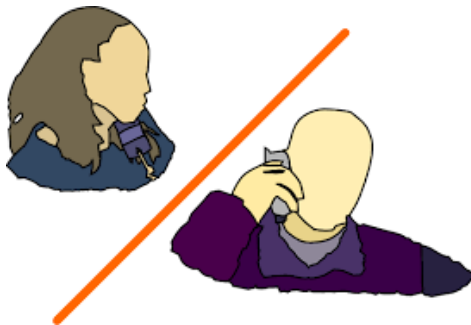"Introduction to Screen Readers" Neal Ewers, Trace Research Center (2:27-3:41)

Demonstration of screen reader navigating Word and PowerPoint docs

Sighted Users See the "Visual Landscape" of the Page

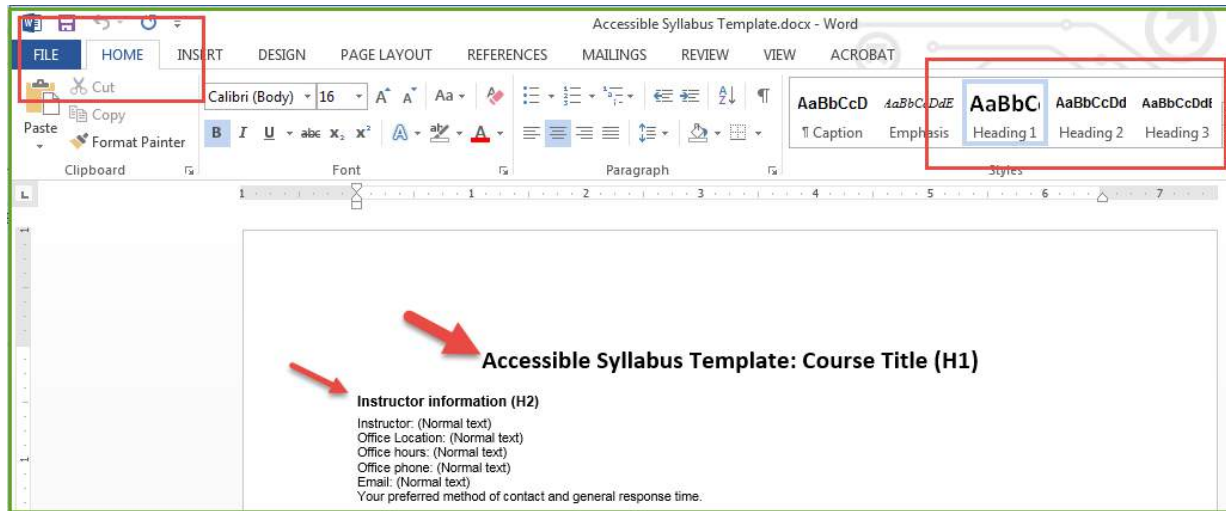# Sighted Users Provide a Map for Screen Reader Users to Navigate this Landscape

Overview of "Landmarks" We Can Place in Our Documents

- Headers

- Hyperlinks

- Lists

- Images

- Tables
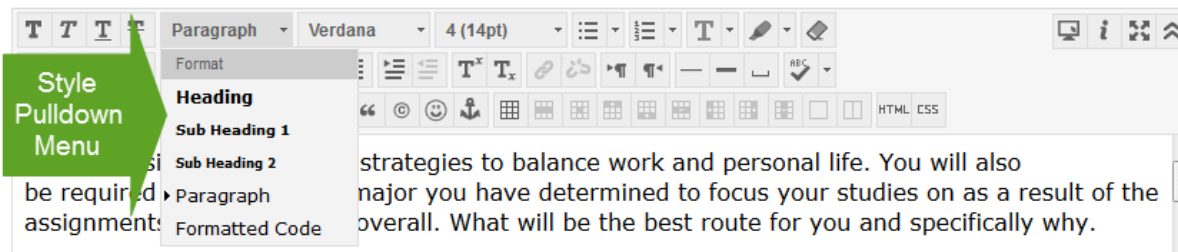
Headers = Table of Contents

In MS Word

In Blackboard

Hyperlinks = Exit Signs

- Screen Readers can scan links
- Therefore use descriptive links (not urls)
- Similarly, avoid "click here" or "more"
- Avoid links longer than 100 characters
- Don't capitalize – screen readers spell out all caps
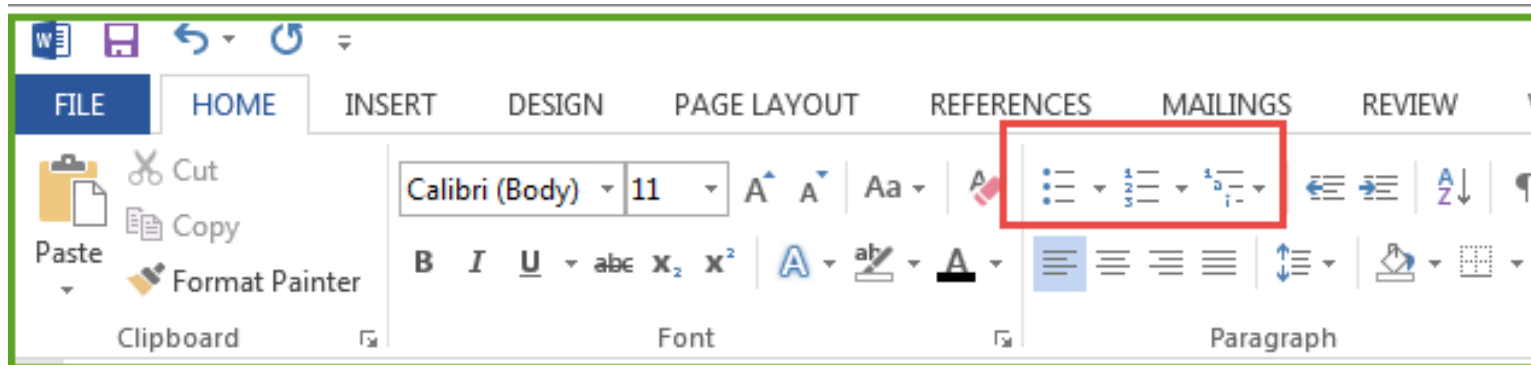
Example:

Don't: Open up https://www.google.com/ and search.

Do: Open up Google and search.

Lists = Arrays of important illustrative details

Use true numbered and bulleted lists to make information "scannable" by screen readers

# Tables = Important information analyzed a particular way

- Let the screen reader know the table is there (tag the table with Alt Text)

- Indicate a header and (if possible) a first column row, to give users a way to get an overview of the table

- Avoid split or merged cells

- Strive for a uniform number of rows and columns

Images = Worth 1000 Words (sometimes)

Don't Describe Decorative Images. Enter " " in description instead.
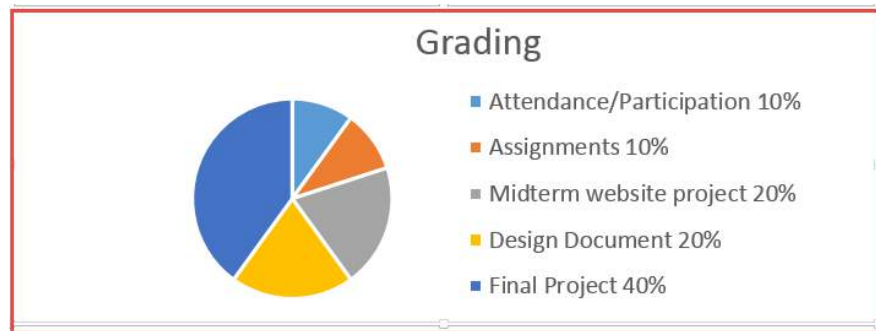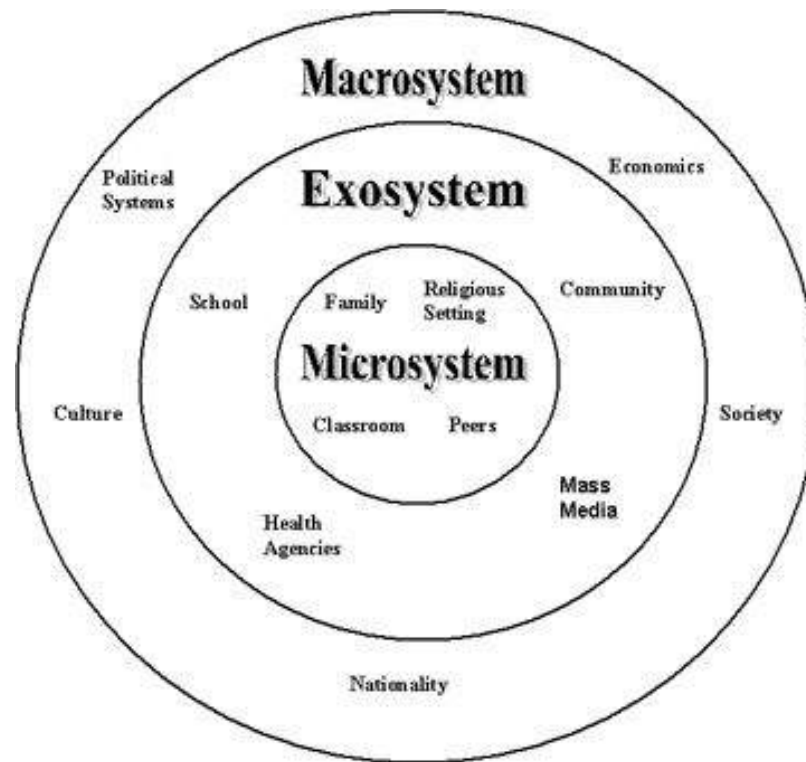

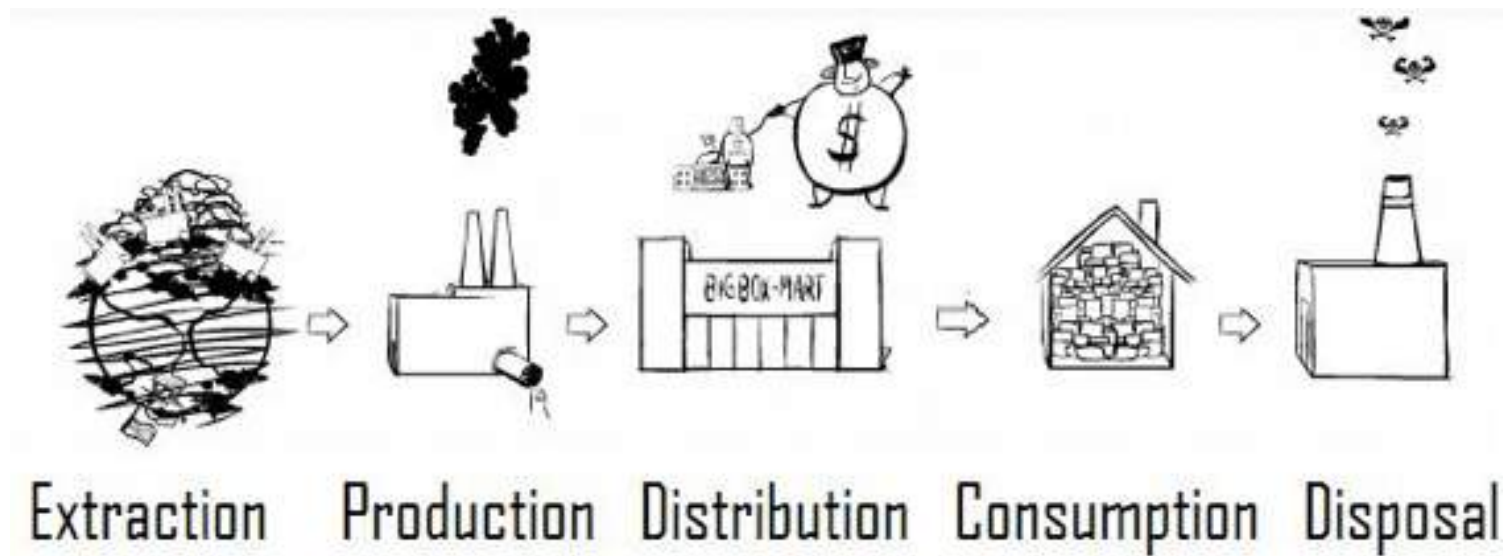**Use "Alt Text" to Describe Images Containing Important Information**

Complex Images:
Need Textual Equivalents

Complex Images:
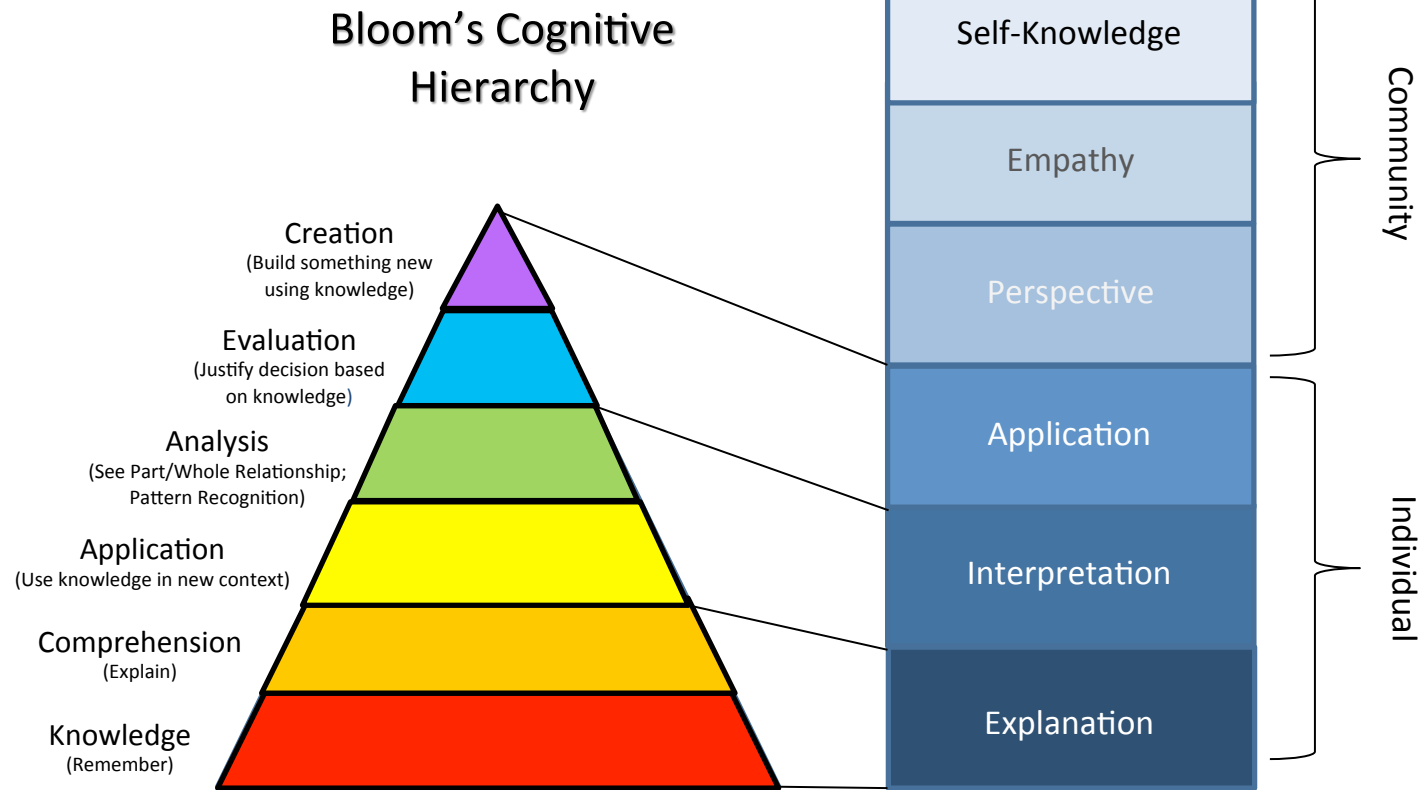# Need Textual Equivalents (cont'd)

Source: The Story of Stuff

How empathy is fostered?

Empathy fostered through…

- Featuring the experience of a screen reader user

- Analogies that build bridges between the experiences of the sighted faculty member and the person with blindness

- Standing in the shoes of the screen reader user

"Scaffolded Empathy"

Wiggins & McTighe's 6 Facets of Understanding

Bloom's Cognitive Hierarchy

Creation
(Build something new using knowledge)

Evaluation
(Justify decision based on knowledge)

Analysis
(See Part/Whole Relationship; Pattern Recognition)

Application
(Use knowledge in new context)

Comprehension
(Explain)

Knowledge
(Remember)

Self-Knowledge

Empathy

Perspective

Application

Interpretation

Explanation

Community

Individual

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Thank you!

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