

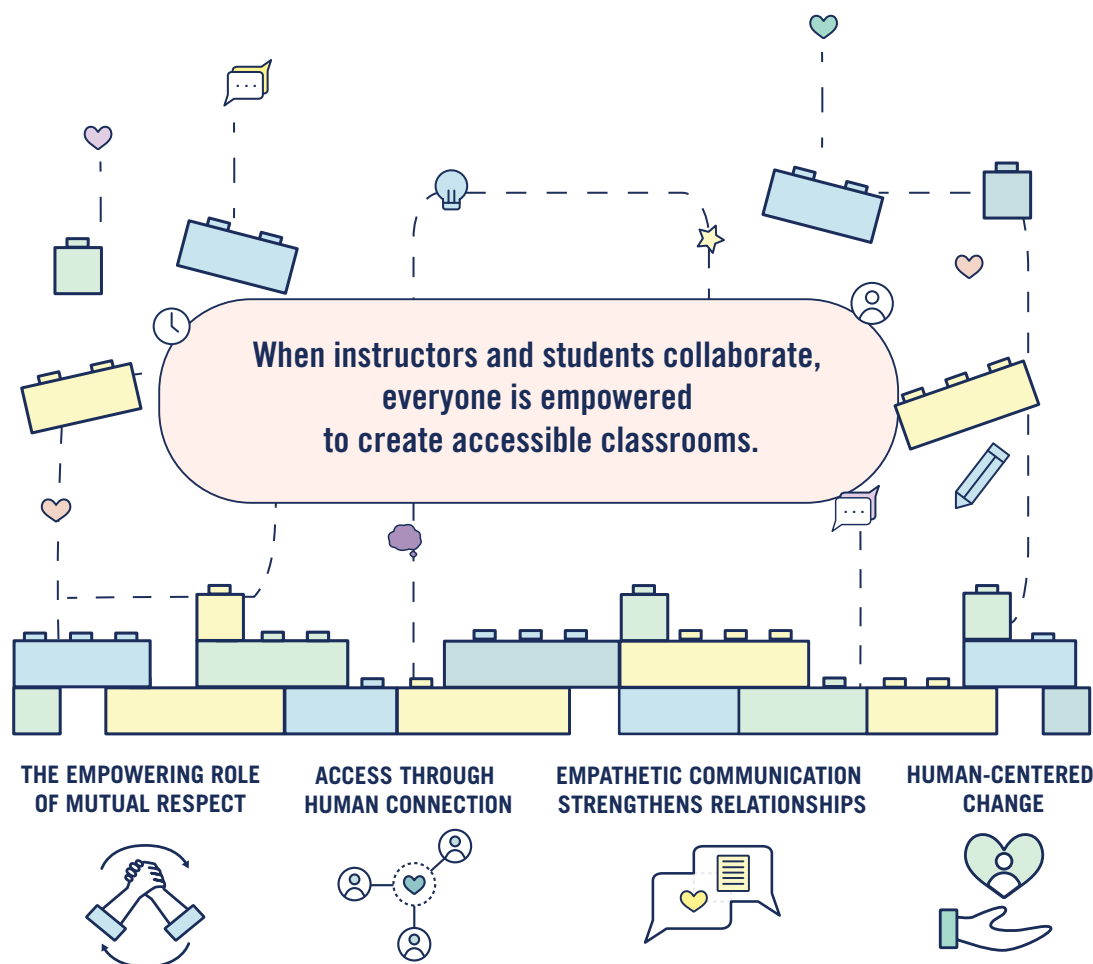
Co-Creating Accessible Classrooms

Student-Instructor Collaboration

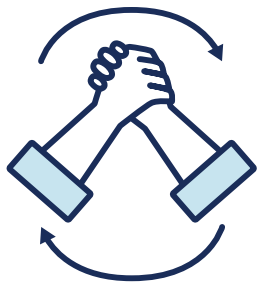
In the summer 2021, the Innovation Hub partnered with Accessibility Services to better understand the experience of accessibility and the accommodations process in the classroom between instructors and students. While Accessibility Services collects student feedback on the support it provides, less is known about how students experience accessibility issues in the classroom, with their coursework, and with instructors. After interviewing and collecting feedback from both students and instructors, we discovered core themes that shape classroom accommodations and accessibility, which we share below.

When instructors and students collaborate, everyone is empowered to create accessible classrooms.

We found that when there is **mutual respect**, **human connection**, **empathetic communication**, and **human-centered change** in classroom accommodations and accessibility, students and instructors are empowered to create more accessible classrooms.

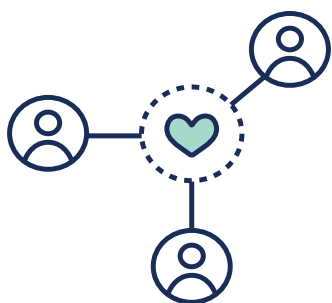


How Is Collaboration & Empowerment Built?



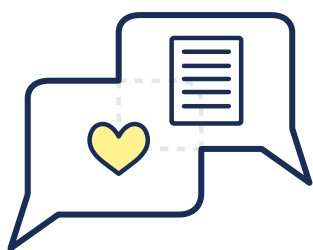
THE EMPOWERING ROLE OF MUTUAL RESPECT

Students and instructors shared that when they felt their learning and teaching needs were valued through mutual respect, they felt empowered to collaborate in making classrooms and coursework accessible together.



ACCESS THROUGH HUMAN CONNECTION

Both students and instructors reported caring about accessibility but they felt the process of accommodation can sometimes be bureaucratic. When accessibility is about partnership and supporting both students and instructors in the learning and teaching process, all stakeholders form human connection that makes accessibility possible.



EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION STRENGTHENS RELATIONSHIPS

Students explained that despite accessibility being more open to discussion, they may struggle with feelings of stigma and that their learning needs were being met with distrust every so often/at times/now and again. Empathetic communication and understanding led students to be able to overcome such challenges and begin to have open conversations with instructors.



HUMAN-CENTERED CHANGE

When instructors build in accessibility in everyday, small, and often creative ways at the outset, these gradual changes can build up to larger, more meaningful and long-lasting change that highlight how accessibility is everyone's everyday responsibility.

In the next steps of this project, we will be meeting with the community to share back our findings and brainstorm ideas for next steps.

