**Interview 5:**

**Interviewee: Norah Sinclair**

**1. Could you give me the general demographic data of you know what disabilities students have?** In postsecondary education, top five disabilities, or learning disabilities, 31% ADHD, 18% psychiatric disabilities, 15% health, chronic 11, mobility 7. But at Georgia Tech, it's a little bit different. It's the symbological autism spectrum the most.

**1. Could you tell me a bit about you and your field?**

**Education:** I have a media arts degree and I also have a BA in English.

**Work:** I have worked at Georgia Tech for the last 13yrs, I work primarily as an instructional designer, but I've had a variety of different roles at CIDI and at Georgia Tech too. More recently, we created a course for Georgia Tech faculty on inclusive and accessible course design. So, we created that course and I worked with some subject specialist subject matter experts at CIDI. To put that content together and then we did make it available as part of the Remote Learning Academy. During the pandemic we had this remote learning Academy. Collaboration and feedback would definitely improve the quality of accessible document creation at CIDI. I do think by involving users / students, faculty will provide improved accessible documents by reducing errors and increasing user satisfaction.

Thank you for those questions. It was a pleasure to talk with you earlier this week. As I mentioned I am interested to see the results of your project when it has been completed.

Prior to that I worked as an instructional technology facilitator in K12 schools in Asheville, NC, as an instructional technology specialist integrating technology in the classroom.

**2.** **In your experience, what are the challenges that students with disabilities encounter when accessing learning materials?**

We have lots of Visual disability students. That is one of the main focuses at CIDI has to do with creating accessible documents and accessible websites. Because if the materials are not accessible to students who are blind or have visual disabilities, they just don't have access to the information at all. A big emphasis at CIDI is making sure it’s both inclusive design, accessible design, and universal design bringing all those things together. Though, if you're optimizing something for someone who is visually impaired, you're not necessarily creating the best product for somebody with a learning disability. There are some things that are important and kind of overlap for everything, and that has to do with clear content design, clear language. We do follow the web content accessibility guidelines of perceivable (in text format), operable, understandable, and robust documents making sure that people with sensory disabilities (including blind and hearing) need to have captions. In general, sensory disabled students have problems with reading and writing and we have tools to convert documents to suit their needs.

**3.** **Can you give me an example of how you apply different tools, applications, and methods to help users overcome their challenges?**

**Images**: if you have images you want to be providing alt text descriptions. So basically, the text or the English needs to be clear for a broad range of disabled students to be able to understand.

**Psychological disabilities:** making websites like canvas is designed using inclusive design principles to make sure it is clear and easy to understand.

**W3C Groups**: We have been looking at W3C cognitive group. They have some additional guidelines that are available now, but we have not yet totally implemented them within the official guidelines for the W3C. Hopefully we will implement those soon. It will help us make the content usable for people with cognitive and learning disabilities. It will help users find what they need, how to use them. Clear content will help users focus and help process things without relying on memory.

**Different Assessment:** Disabled students may have difficulty reading and writing, but may be highly intelligent. We provide opportunities for disabled students to show their learning by producing a video or a podcast. This is a different way of assessing learning than the traditional ways.

**Ally:** built in accessibility-checker in Canvas. It gives accessibility ratings (red, yellow, green) for documents. Based on that rating, you know which documents need improvement (the red ones). Let’s say we have a PDF, for example, that has no text.  
 You know it's an image and needs to be converted to text. If the pdf is an image, we use the OCR program which is built into Ally and it will translate the document into text depending on the quality of the original document.

**Adobe Acrobat professional:** We also use Adobe Acrobat professional that has accessibility checker and help with what you need to do to convert the PDF into an accessible document.

**Closed caption:** If it’s a video file, Canvas can automatically add captions when the file is uploaded.

**Microsoft office products:** it has inclusive design

**4.** **What aspects of creating accessible content is most challenging, why are they challenging? and how have you overcome these challenges? Can you tell me about your process when you make these changes?**

**Graphics:** Statistics books have lots of equations and are hard for disabled students to read. Graphics, graphs, and charts are challenging for this group of students. Converting such content is challenging, but access to a table with raw data in it is then easy.

**Power point**: materials are challenging as they can contain lots of images especially because the screen reader will read it in the order the images are placed in the page.

**5.** **Can you share any experiences where you modified content? What changes were made?**

1. Older pdf documents are not really text, making sure that PDFs are not images, they need to be text.

2. making sure that documents are formatted with headings

3. images have alt text. So, you don't accidentally read the wrong one,

4. just being very clear in the design.

5. Using layout and language that's used in the learning management.   
  
**6. Final thoughts on how CIDI positively impacts student experience at Georgia Tech?**

I believe accessibility is essential to creating an inclusive student community.Everyone should have equal opportunities to access information, technology, and class materials. Accessibility is a means to bridge the gap and ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully in the college experience. It is also a fundamental right, and efforts should be made to remove barriers and promote access for everyone. It is also a means to empower students with disabilities, promoting independence. It can positively impact the research goals of Georgia Tech as an organization. By making products, services, and environments accessible, we can cater to the needs of diverse student populations which can also create new opportunities. Accessibility should be a core concept and not an afterthought. At CIDI, we use universal design and inclusive design principles to create content for everyone.