Top 10 Tips to Make Your Online Course Accessible

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Introduction

Accessibility is not just about providing accommodations when requested. Accessible courses and course content anticipate the potential needs of diverse learners, and remove barriers or provide alternatives in advance.

Tip 1: Take Time to Plan an Online Teaching-Learning Strategy

Course elements (activities, assessments, etc.) follow a consistent structure and routine throughout the course.

Student activities are varied and take into account different learning styles. To learn more about the Universal Design for Learning, visit the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) website (http://cast.org).

Tip 2: Use Constructive Course Alignment

Constructive alignment in teaching links the instructional design of learning behaviors, with an instructional design that clarifies student outcomes and transfer questions. Implementing constructive alignment in course design results in explicitly linking teaching and learning activities, to classroom assessments and evaluation, to course learning objectives, and ultimately to course learning outcomes.

Start with the end in mind. Consider including this type of flowchart specific to your course, in the course syllabus to help students see the connections between course assignments and learning outcomes.

Tip 3: Develop Assessments & Evaluations to Support Course Learning Outcomes

How: For the appropriate wording visit CELT’s course alignment website (http://bit.ly/coursealignment).

Tip 4: Use the Quality Matters (QM) Framework

All of these 8 QM course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. When aligned, each of these components is directly tied to and supports the course learning objectives.

For more information or access to the full QM Course Review, visit QM’s website (http://www.qualitymatters.org).

Tip 5: Use Consistent Page Titles & Headings

Examples: Not formatted with headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Section A</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Knowledge 1</td>
<td>Standard 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Section B</td>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Knowledge 2</td>
<td>Standard 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Section C</td>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Knowledge 3</td>
<td>Standard 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: Properly formatted headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Knowledge 2</td>
<td>Standard 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Section C</td>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Knowledge 3</td>
<td>Standard 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tip 6: Use Alt-Text & Long Descriptions on All Images

When writing alt-text, consider the context of the image. What information is the image conveying to users? Sometimes the answer is none, if the image is purely decorative, and this is acceptable! The alt-text can be left empty if it serves no informational purpose.

Tip 7: Use Accessible Color Choices

Use a color analyzer to see if the colors you are choosing for your website or PowerPoint will pass the contrast ratio.

Tip 8: Use Descriptive & Unique Hyperlinks

Use descriptive and unique hyperlinks. This is another strategy to help screen reader users. When providing a link, the link text should describe what it is going to.

Tip 9: Create Accessible Multimedia

One of the most well-known accessibility features is video clips. However, they are only one of many items needed to make multimedia—video, audio, and audio/video recordings—accessible.

Example: Create a Syllabus Walk through

A syllabus is a necessary task at the beginning of every class. Students need to know where to find resources, how to evaluate them, and when they are due for the learning ahead. A well-organized syllabus offers an overview of the course contents in the beginning of every class.

Tip 10: Include the Accessibility Statement in Syllabus

Include the university’s syllabus statement on students with disabilities accommodations. Consider placing the information towards the start of your syllabus to emphasize the importance of the information.

How: For the appropriate wording visit CELT’s Faculty Senate Recommendations for Syllabus Statement website (http://bit.ly/2p63EK7).

Evaluate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment 1</th>
<th>Assignment 2</th>
<th>Assignment 3</th>
<th>Assignment 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project A</td>
<td>Project B</td>
<td>Project C</td>
<td>Project D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tip 11: Include the Accessible Syllabus Statement

Include the university’s syllabus statement on students with disabilities accommodations.

Next Steps: Scaffold for Success

Scaffold for Success includes implementation strategies, begin with a timeline to parcel out “Accessifying” your course. Use a resource such as CELT’s Individual Access Plan (IAP) Toolkit website (http://bit.ly/2mCpGWy).

Available resources and links:

- CELT’s Accessify Your Course website (http://bit.ly/celt-accessify)
- CELT’s Accessify Your Course website (http://bit.ly/2p63EK7)
- Quality Matters (QM) Framework (http://www.qualitymatters.org)
- For more information or access to the full QM Course Review, visit QM’s website (http://www.qualitymatters.org)