Accessibility

PRESENTED BY CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND TITLE V UNIDOS –
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What does it mean?

► Accessibility is the design of products, devices, services, and environments for people who experience disabilities.

► It's strongly tied to Universal Design Learning (UDL)

► It benefits:

  ► Students with disabilities

  ► Students who are English language learners

  ► Students who work in different noise level environments

Accessibililty

- The definition of "accessible" used by the Office of Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Education regarding inaccessible IT is as follows:
  - "*Accessible*" *means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability.*

Accommodation

- "Accommodations" are adaptations made for specific individuals when a product or service is not accessible, such as providing captions on a video only when a specific student who is deaf requests them rather than including them in the original product design.
- Can also mean extra test-taking time or extra time to do an assignment.

Content Online

- ▶ Assume students have a wide range of technology skills and provide options for gaining the technology skills needed for course participation.
- ▶ **Present content in multiple ways** (e.g., in a combination of text, video, audio, and/or image format).

Classroom Response

- ▶ Discussion board works for those who cannot answer in the classroom
- ▶ Promote effective communication.
  - ▶ Employ interactive teaching techniques. Face the class, speak clearly, consider using a microphone, and make eye contact with students. Offer both in-person contact and online communication.
  - ▶ Use straightforward language, avoid unnecessary jargon and complexity, and use student names in electronic and in-person communications.
  - ▶ Provide directions verbally and in writing
- ▶ Make interactions accessible to all participants. Use multiple ways to interact. Make expectations verbal and in printed format for discussions, presentations, and small groups.
- ▶ Encourage different ways for students to interact with each other (e.g., in-class discussion, group work, and Internet-based communications). Insist that all students participate; facilitate their participation as needed.
 - ▶ Burgstahler, 2017

Test-taking & Assignments

- ▶ Use D2L to help those who need additional time to complete
- ▶ Follow the allowances sent by David Esquibel
- ▶ Use MathML instead of jpg images for math equations
- ▶ Tables – no merged cells, use headers to identify rows and columns, use table title
- ▶ Readable pdf (not image based)
- ▶ Use MS word, Adobe Acrobat accessibility checker, use web accessibility checker for web pages (Word -File/Info, Adobe Pro)
- ▶ Also develop multiple options for students to complete assignments

Designing for Screen Readers

- ▶ Use descriptive wording for hyperlink text (e.g., "DO-IT Knowledge Base" rather than "click here").
- ▶ Minimize the use of PDFs, **especially when presented as an image**; make sure the text is accessible by testing to see if you can copy and paste it. Always offer a text-based alternative as well.
- ▶ **Provide concise alternative-text descriptions** of content presented within images.
- ▶ Use large, bold fonts on uncluttered pages with plain backgrounds.
- ▶ Make sure all content and navigation is accessible using the **keyboard alone**.

▶ Semantic headings (use HTML <H1> rather than make it bigger font as a header)

▶ Same with bulleted lists <ul> html code

▶ Images should have alt text or caption
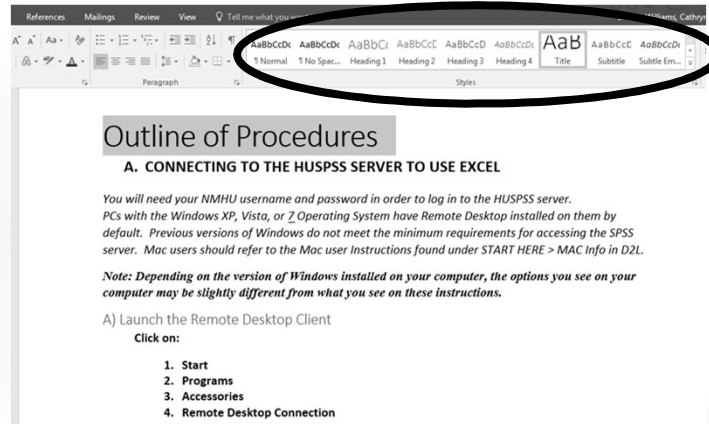
Color Issues

▶ **Use color combinations that are high contrast** and can be read by those who are colorblind.
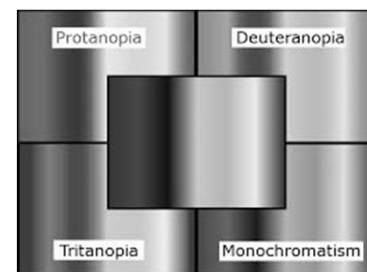
Deaf Students

► **<u>Caption or transcribe video and audio content</u>**.

► Face the student so they can lip read.
► Work with the interpreter.
► Project your voice for those who are hard of hearing or have to rely on hearing aids.
► Avoid a setup that requires visual attention to two things at the same time (ie an interpreter *and* a computer screen where you are demonstrating something while talking)

References

► Burgstahler, Sheryl. (2017) ADA Compliance for Online Course Design. Educause Review. https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design

► Burgstahler, Sheryl. (2017) Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction. https://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-instruction