

Easy Ways to Improve Accessibility Practices Online

Follow these practices!

- Use descriptive file names for recognition at a glance. No spaces or special characters!
- Materials should be easy to see, hear and read. Come to CTE if you need help or equipment.
- Use closed captioning if it is available (don't wait to be asked).
- CTE will create accessible pdf's for you! Bring your books or journals to CTE (please give us 14 days). We can also help develop a departmental work flow.
- Use Brightspace (D2L) for websites. It's accessible! Free websites are not.
- Describe your pictures! Brightspace prompts you. Use alt text for images in Microsoft Office.
- Use Brightspaces' accessibility features! There is an equation editor, accessible templates, and an accessibility checker (see additional handout or google "brightspace accessibility").
- Use Microsoft Office's accessibility features. You should add alt text, format instead of using spaces, and assign a language (see handouts or google "Make your [MS Office product] accessible").

Reasons to use good accessibility practices as you go:

- All students benefit from good accessibility practices, ESL students especially so. A sighted student can benefit from screen readable text, descriptive file names save everyone time, and video captioning can help anyone when they miss a phrase, get distracted, or are viewing in a noisy area.
- Unexpected disabilities happen. Even if due to unanticipated accident or illness, every student is still entitled to have the same learning experience as their peers.
- Students may not know they have a disability, or not realize that an accommodation can greatly improve their learning and classroom experience.
- Students may not ask for accommodation, even when they know it would help them academically. There are many reasons for this, including embarrassment, not wanting to call attention to themselves, or concern they will be perceived as "less able" when they simply need accommodation.
- Less work retrofitting content if you do have a student with disabilities enroll in your course. Following good accessibility practices means you have created an inclusive environment for all students, and prepared for the most common disabilities.
- Students with disabilities MUST have "substantially equivalent ease of use."

What should I do if I have a student with a disability?

- Disability Support Services staff will work with you if a student has a disability that requires accommodation. You will be contacted by DSS to determine any additional steps needed to make your course accessible.
- Even though you follow recommended practices, there may be additional accommodation requests. Each student is unique. Disability Support Services and CTE staff will work with you to ensure these additional requests are resolved in a timely manner.
- If a student seems to be struggling due to a disability, REFER them to Disability Support Services. Students may not know services are available or how to advocate for themselves.

Good Accessibility Practices Are Good For Everyone! 2017 CTE, SIUC