

General Tips for Creating Accessible Materials

"We must ensure that all students can complete an activity thoroughly and independently regardless of disability."
-Provost Ainsworth

Why is accessible content important?

Everyone with a disability does not self-identify; a disability may be invisible or undiagnosed. Therefore, it is important to have accessible materials at all times. More importantly, when done correctly, accessible content can improve the learning experience for everyone regardless of ability.

Types of disabilities to keep in mind:

There are several things that can potentially affect a person's ability to access information. Not all of these things are what we think of as "disabilities" but they can affect anyone at any time.

- Visual Ability - blind, low vision, color-blind
- Auditory Ability - hard of hearing, deafness
- Motor Ability - inability to use a mouse, slow response time, limited fine motor control
- Cognitive Ability - traumatic brain injury (TBI), Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, dyslexia

Accommodation vs. Accessible: What's the difference?

Accommodation - Adjustments that are made on an individual case by case basis.

Accessible - Allows individuals with disabilities to:

- Acquire the same information as individuals without disabilities
- Engage in the same interactions as individuals without disabilities
- Enjoy the same services within the same time frame as individuals without disabilities

What to do when creating materials:

- Keep language simple, clear, and concise; avoid using jargon and technical language.
- Avoid using busy backgrounds or unnecessary decorations as they can be distracting and make content hard to read.
- Use Arabic numerals instead of Roman numerals. Screen readers do not recognize the difference between Roman numerals and intentionally repeated letters.
- Use matte, non-glossy paper for printed materials when possible.
- Try to provide as many means of conveying information as possible. (e.g. print, visual, audio)
- For any visual representation (i.e. pictures, tables, charts, graphs) include alternative text that can be read with a screen reader.
- All videos must be captioned. Transcripts can be used in addition to captions but cannot be substituted for captioned videos.

Resources:

Accessible Technology Initiative:

<https://www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/accessible-technology-initiative/>

UT System IT Technology Policy

http://policy.tennessee.edu/it_policy/it0126/

Accessibility Tutorials:

<https://www.utc.edu/walker-center-teaching-learning/accessibility.php>

Disability Resource Center:

<http://www.utc.edu/disability-resource-center/>