

Tips for Universal Design and Accessibility of the Classroom

Classroom Presentation

- Face the class when speaking.
- Provide crisp, high contrast printed handouts.
- Verbally describe images on all slides and overheads.
- Repeat student questions and comments out loud.
- Show only videos with captions and look for those with audio descriptions.
- Use a microphone when speaking in a large lecture hall.

Classroom Climate

- Encourage open communication and invite students to meet with you to discuss access issues and accommodations by including a statement on your syllabus.
- Provide handouts and guided notes ahead of time in accessible (e.g. doc, ePub, HTML, PDF) electronic format.
- Provide crisp, high contrast materials with readable sans serif fonts. Do not use color, bold, or italics for emphasis. (These are not read by screen readers.). Use the “Strong” and ‘Emphasis” paragraph styles.
- Include text descriptions for all images.
- Ensure PDFs are readable with text-to-speech/screen reader (i.e. PDF is not accessible if individual letters and words cannot be highlighted)
- Use multiple methods of
 - Presentation (e.g. lecture, videos, Power Point/slides, demonstration, graphics)
 - Engagement (e.g. discussion, activity, oral/written, role-play, case studies)
 - Assessment (e.g. oral/written, multiple choice or essay, presentation, project)
- Provide accessible Classroom Technology (e.g. clickers, LMS, software) usable by all students, either directly or through use of assistive technology.

Tips for Universal Design and Accessibility of the Online Course

Online Presentation

- Encourage participants to identify themselves before speaking, use a dedicated microphone, and face the camera when speaking.
- Minimize simultaneous communication (e.g. use asynchronous discussions, refrain from chat/questions during a presentation.)
- Verbally describe images.
- Provide captioning or a transcript for audio files.
- Show only videos with captions (or provide transcripts) and also look for audio description.
- Provide crisp, high contrast online materials with readable sans serif fonts. Do not use color, bold, or italics for emphasis. (These are not read by screen readers.). Use the “Strong” and ‘Emphasis” paragraph styles.
- Use Accessibility checkers to test materials and websites, e.g. <http://wave.webaim.org/>.

Online Climate

- Syllabus should include an accommodation statement, course content, course expectations, a contact for technical support, and preferred options and timelines for communication with students (e.g. email, Skype, phone, 24-48 hour response time).
- Provide handouts and notes in accessible format (e.g. doc, ePub, HTML, PDF), which can be highlighted, copied or pasted, and can be read with text-to-speech software/screen reader. Insure logical headings.
- Include text descriptions for all images.
- Use multiple methods of
 - Presentation (e.g. text, videos, PowerPoint/slides, graphics, mini lectures)
 - Engagement (e.g. oral/written discussion, small groups, case studies)
 - Assessment (e.g. oral/written, multiple choice or essay, presentation, project)
- Provide accessible Online Classroom Technology (e.g. LMS, software) usable by all students, either directly or with use of assistive technology.