



Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness

Learning Collaborative Toolkit:

Accessible Education for All

Updated by the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness on July 15, 2020.

This tool provides information on creating a more accessible learning environment for all students.

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The Baruch College mission and accessibility

Baruch College provides an inclusive, transformational education in the arts and sciences, business, and public and international affairs to students from New York and around the world and creates new knowledge through scholarship and research.

https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/about/mission_statement2013.html

Part of an inclusive education is an accessible education.

Accessible education

The Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness encourages use of the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in course development – UDL facilitates learning for all students, across all modalities and teaching environments.

Universal Design for Learning is a framework that guides the design of learning goals, materials, methods, and assessments, as well as policies surrounding these elements, with the diversity of learners in mind.

Learn more about Universal Design for Learning. <http://udloncampus.cast.org/home> including how to design an [accessible syllabus](#), how to develop [accessible learning goals](#), and how to [assess in an accessible manner](#).

Provide multiple means of Engagement



Affective Networks
The "WHY" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Representation



Recognition Networks
The "WHAT" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Action & Expression



Strategic Networks
The "HOW" of Learning

Access

Provide options for Recruiting Interest (7)

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy (7.1)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2)
- Minimize threats and distractions (7.3)

Provide options for Perception (1)

- Offer ways of customizing the display of information (1.1)
- Offer alternatives for auditory information (1.2)
- Offer alternatives for visual information (1.3)

Provide options for Physical Action (4)

- Vary the methods for response and navigation (4.1)
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies (4.2)

Build

Provide options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence (8)

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives (8.1)
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge (8.2)
- Foster collaboration and community (8.3)
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback (8.4)

Provide options for Language & Symbols (2)

- Clarify vocabulary and symbols (2.1)
- Clarify syntax and structure (2.2)
- Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols (2.3)
- Promote understanding across languages (2.4)
- Illustrate through multiple media (2.5)

Provide options for Expression & Communication (5)

- Use multiple media for communication (5.1)
- Use multiple tools for construction and composition (5.2)
- Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance (5.3)

Internalize

Provide options for Self Regulation (9)

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (9.1)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (9.3)

Provide options for Comprehension (3)

- Activate or supply background knowledge (3.1)
- Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (3.2)
- Guide information processing and visualization (3.3)
- Maximize transfer and generalization (3.4)

Provide options for Executive Functions (6)

- Guide appropriate goal-setting (6.1)
- Support planning and strategy development (6.2)
- Facilitate managing information and resources (6.3)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4)

Goal

Expert learners who are...

Purposeful & Motivated

Resourceful & Knowledgeable

Strategic & Goal-Directed

Accessibility in online course design

(This section is taken directly from Burgstahler 2017, ADA Compliance for Online Course Design <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design>)

Providing multiple ways for students to gain knowledge, demonstrate knowledge, and interact goes a long way toward making a course accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

Accessibility efforts benefit not only students with disabilities but also students who are English language learners and those working in noisy or quiet environments.

For **course web pages, documents, images, and videos**:

1. Use clear, consistent layouts and organization schemes for presenting content.
2. **Structure headings** (using style features built into the learning management system, Word, PowerPoint, PDFs, etc.) and use built-in designs/layouts (e.g., for PPT slides).
3. Use descriptive wording for hyperlink text (e.g., "DO-IT Knowledge Base" rather than "click here").
4. 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.
5. **Provide concise alternative-text descriptions** of content presented within images.
6. Use large, bold fonts on uncluttered pages with plain backgrounds.
7. **Use color combinations that are high contrast** and can be read by those who are colorblind.
8. Make sure all content and navigation is accessible using the **keyboard alone**.
9. **Caption or transcribe video and audio content.**

With respect to **instructional methods**:

10. Assume students have a wide range of technology skills and provide options for gaining the technology skills needed for course participation.

11. **Present content in multiple ways** (e.g., in a combination of text, video, audio, and/or image format).
12. Address a wide range of language skills as you write content (e.g., spell out terms rather than relying on acronyms alone, define terms, avoid or define jargon).
13. Make instructions and expectations clear for activities, projects, and assigned reading.
14. Make examples and assignments relevant to learners with a wide variety of interests and backgrounds.
15. Offer outlines and other scaffolding tools to help students learn.
16. Provide adequate opportunities for practice.
17. Allow adequate time for activities, projects, and tests (e.g., give details of project assignments in the syllabus so that students can start working on them early).
18. Provide feedback on project parts and offer corrective opportunities.
19. Provide options for communicating and collaborating that are accessible to individuals with a variety of disabilities.
20. Provide options for demonstrating learning (e.g., different types of test items, portfolios, presentations, discussions).

Learn more about ADA compliance for online course design.

<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design>