LEARNINGHOUSE

Monthly Workshop Series: Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Workshop Summary

When designing an online course, you always need to consider the variety of students that you'll be teaching. Leveraging a basic style guide, you can produce instructional materials that will address the needs of students with most disabilities, be they visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive, and also help protect you from possible legal actions. But "accessibility" in its broadest sense isn't solely about designing with the needs of students with disabilities in mind, but also providing options for your instructional materials and flexibility in your assessment instructions, which can address both disabilities as well as learning preferences. In this session, we'll explore what the law dictates about the design of online courses and discuss how designing your course with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework in mind can help you kill two birds with one stone.

Session Information

Date/Time	Thursday, 15 November 2018, 1-2 pm ET
Session URL	http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/fd-udl-1811/
Audio	Audio for the workshop may be done either via phone or your computer's microphone and speakers. For phone users, use this call-in information: Number: (888) 619-1583 Passcode: 712 743 4023
Recommended Reading	1. Improving Accessibility for All Users (2,619 words) 2. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at a Glance (546 words) 3. Designing Course Content for Screen Readers (1,288 words) 4. Universal Design for Learning: The Recognition Network (1,232 words / 6 min, 11 sec video) 5. Universal Design for Learning: The Strategic Network (1,182 words) 6. Check Your Syllabus 101: Disability Access Statements (1,680 words)
Instructions	At or just before the start time of the session, click the "Session URL" above, sign in as a guest (with your full name), and Adobe Connect will launch in your browser.
Technical Requirements	Computer with a web browser Phone OR speakers/microphone attached to computer (for workshop audio) Internet speed of DSL or higher (>512 kbps)

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Recommended Reading

Designing for accessibility sounds complicated and time-consuming on the surface. How do you address the variety of disabilities that you might face with the broad demographic of online students, without feeling like you're doing needless work (in the event that your course doesn't have any students with disabilities)?

The first step is to be familiar with the laws and standards that govern accessibility considerations in education. During our session, we'll discuss sections 504 and 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), all of which apply to instructional materials you might include in your online course. We've included some articles that act as reference material for some of these standards, namely "Improving Accessibility for All Users," "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at a Glance," and "Designing Course Content for Screen Readers." They address more of the nuts and bolts of disabilities in the online classroom: what kinds you might face, and how to design instructional materials with them in mind.

But there's a broader way to think about "accessibility" in your online courses. Accessibility can be cast in terms of *preferences* rather than just *disabilities*. Within this perspective, all students regardless of disability exist on various spectrums in terms of how they prefer to consume materials, how they prefer to communicate ideas, and what motivates them.

Universal Design for Learning is an instructional design framework that adopts this perspective, helping instructors proactively address both disabilities and learning preferences through course design best practices. It suggests that when it comes to learning, there are three "networks" in the brain: the recognition, strategic, and affective networks. "Universal Design for Learning: The Recognition Network" and "Universal Design for Learning: The Strategic Network" cover the first two networks at a high level, and we'll discuss all three of them in depth during the session.

The last article ("Check Your Syllabus 101: Disability Access Statements") will be a discussion piece for the workshop. In short, it recommends that instructors go beyond traditional "boilerplate" disability access statements in their syllabi and instead craft personalized and supportive messages to supplement or replace the legalese.

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Adobe Connect Tips

We'll be using Adobe Connect to run our live session. This application can run within your browser of choice, or, if you prefer, you can install the Adobe Connect add-in to have it run as a standalone desktop application.

- If possible, do try to consume the recommended readings prior to the start of session, since the session will build on these materials.
- Be sure that you're in a quiet location with a good internet connection.
- Audio for the session may be done via phone or VOIP (computer microphone and speakers).
- Please mute your audio when you are not speaking. Whether you're using your phone or your computer for audio, headphones are strongly recommended, to reduce the chance of feedback or echoes.
- If using your computer's microphone and speakers, we recommend you arrive a minute or two early and run the Audio Setup Wizard. Once you're in the Adobe Connect room, you can run the wizard by clicking **Meeting > Audio Setup Wizard**.
- There may be polls, activities, and discussions. Please be prepared to participate and don't hesitate to ask questions at any point!
- Be sure to sign in once you arrive so we know who has attended the session. Though the URL will be provided in the Adobe Connect room, you can also find it here: https://form.jotformpro.com/learninghouse/fd-signin

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