

## How Can I Make My Course Content More Accessible?

Presented by:

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## **MAGNA Publications 20 Minute Mentor: “How can I make my course content more accessible”**

**Slide 1: MAGNA Publications Presents** “How can I make my course content more accessible inclusive?”

**Slide 2: Presenter:** Elizabeth G. Harrison, Ph.D. Director, Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center’s Office of Learning Resources and Associate Director, Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center, University of Dayton. [eharrison1@udayton.edu](mailto:eharrison1@udayton.edu)

### **Slide 3: Why accessibility?**

- Provide equitable opportunity to learn
- Diversity of students today
- Legal mandates
- Focus on student learning

### **Slide 4: We all make assumptions when we design for our teaching.**

If we examine our assumptions, we can make more accessible choices that better support our students.

### **Slide 5: We expect students to acquire information in many ways**

- In print
- Electronically
- Through multimedia
- In class

### **Slide 6: A thought process to follow:**

1. Identify your goals
2. Examine your assumptions and the barriers they may create
3. Consider what’s essential
4. Eliminate barriers

### **Slide 7: An example.**

The slide shows the first page of a worksheet printed on paper. It has four problems on it, each taking 2-4 lines of print in a very small font. There is about an inch and a half of space after each problem in which students can show their work and the answer. Beside the image is the list of four steps: Identify goals. Examine assumptions. Consider what is essential. Eliminate barriers.

### **Slide 8: New design**

The same worksheet is on the left. To the right is the first page of the redesigned worksheet. This new version has only two problems on the page, in much larger font and with much more space in which to work the problems.

### **Slide 9: Print materials**

- Choose larger font, more space, high contrast
- Provide alternative media versions
- Have students work together

**Slide 10: Electronic materials 1**

- Provide image descriptions using alt tags
- Use links that describe their destination: make the link say Test results rather than Click here

**Slide 11: Electronic materials 2**

- Make pdf files accessible: use Styles in MS Word
- WebAIM.org: Principles of Accessible Design and WAVE accessibility checker

**Slide 12: Multimedia in class**

- Describe images out loud
- Give voice to text on the screen
- Provide an e-text version
- Use captioning

**Slide 13: In class**

- Check volume
- Provide learning goals or road map
- Give specific instructions
- Describe objects or demonstrations
- Use multiple media: say it + show it

**Slide 14: Remember**

Our goal is equitable opportunity for students to learn. If we examine our assumptions, we can make more accessible choices that better support our students.

**Slide 15: We'd like to know what you think!**

Our evaluation form is located here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHmentor1>

## **A Protocol for Thinking about Accessibility in Your Courses**

with questions to prompt reflection

### **1. Identify the purpose and goals of what you are planning**

- › Why are you planning this course or activity or assignment or . . . ?
- › How does it relate to what you've done previously or to what is coming afterward?
- › What do you want your students to know or be able to do or value at the end of the course/activity/assignment?
- › What do you want your students to retain from your course three years after it is over?

### **2. Examine your assumptions**

- › What do your students need to know or be able to do in order to do this successfully—to acquire information, to engage, and/or to demonstrate their learning as asked?
- › What are you assuming your students will know or be able to do in order to be successful?
- › Where do your assumptions come from?
- › Are your assumptions valid?
- › What barriers might your assumptions pose for students?

### **3. Consider what is essential**

- › What elements are essential to what you are planning? That is, which elements, if left out or changed, would mean that students could not meet your goals?
- › Are there elements of what you are planning that are essential to your academic discipline or profession?
- › Why, in academic terms, are they so important? (Note that “tradition” and “habit” are not valid responses!)

### **4. Make more accessible choices for non-essentials** using what you've learned from the online seminar and from the resources provided

### **5. Design or arrange accommodations for essential elements that present barriers for students with disabilities**

## Resources Related to Universal Design

### Web sites

Center for Applied Special Technology <http://cast.org>

CAST has been working in the field for many years, and their website offers everything from definitions and explanations of Universal Design for Learning to guidelines and tools for curriculum development.

University of Connecticut Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability

<http://www.cped.uconn.edu/>

UConn's Center coined the term Universal Design for Instruction when they began to explore this area. Their website houses many specific tools for faculty under the Facultyware link.

DO-IT Center <http://www.washington.edu/doi>

The DO-IT project began as a FIPSE-funded program and has grown to house a vast array of resources related to disability at postsecondary institutions. If you want checklists for what to do for specific disabilities, this may be the site for you.

Flinders University

[http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/teaching-methods/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-teaching\\_home.cfm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/teaching-methods/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-teaching_home.cfm)

Inclusive teaching resources at an Australian university.

San Francisco State University Center for Teaching and Faculty Development

<http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/udl.htm>

Look at SFSU's take on Universal Design for Learning.

Society for Disability Studies <http://www.disstudies.org/>

Web site for the Disability Studies professional association in the US that can provide an understanding of the socially constructed nature of the concept of "disability."

Universal Design Education <http://www.udeducation.org/>

This site focuses on the roots of the concept of universal design in the physical, built environment.

University of Guelph [www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid](http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid)

Universal Instructional Design at a Canadian university.

University of Oregon Teaching Effectiveness Program

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/universaldesign/intro.html>

And a look at Universal Design in College Instruction at another US university.

### Books and articles

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Clapton, J & Fitzgerald, J (2003). New Renaissance Magazine on-line, The History of Disability: A History of 'Otherness'. <http://www.ru.org/artother.html>

Coombs, Norman (2010). *Making Online Teaching Accessible: Inclusive Course Design for Students with Disabilities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Curriculum Transformation and Disability (CTAD): *Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*. <http://www.education.umn.edu/crdeul/books-ctad.html>

Lazzaro, Joseph (1993). *Adaptive Technologies for Learning and Work Environments*. Chicago: American Library Association.

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Wiggins, Grant & McTighe, Jay. (2005). *Understanding by Design* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, Virginia, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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