
Making Your Online Course Content Accessible: 7 Design Decisions You Can Always Make Accessibility Workshop

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

This is a 90-minute, synchronous, online workshop for faculty and staff at a community college. The workshop is designed and facilitated by a faculty member in the college’s Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC). It is designed to introduce participants to some of the foundational design practices for making digital content accessible. Participants will have varying levels of knowledge and experience with selecting or creating and formatting accessible digital documents, presentation files, and multi-media content, and may have no background knowledge of technical accessibility standards (e.g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)), assistive technology, or what students experience when they encounter accessibility barriers in digital content.

The workshop is delivered through a video-conferencing program, and the session is recorded and made available to participants after the session. Enrolment for the workshop is capped at 25 participants.

(Because this workshop is designed as a general introduction to accessible digital content, and because accessible math and other formulaic equations are a more complex undertaking than accessible text and image-based content, accessible STEM equations are out-of-scope for this workshop. This content is the focus of a peer-led workshop, “*STEM Accessibility Online*”)

WORKSHOP SESSION

Reflection Note re: Workshop description:

Faculty and staff could learn about this workshop in the following ways. The workshop dates and description, & goals are:

1. published in the Teaching & Learning Centre's online calendar of upcoming learning events;
2. listed in the "Upcoming Learning Events" section of the Teaching & Learning Centre's monthly Bulletin (*distributed via email listservs and published to TLC website*);
3. included in the "Upcoming Learning Events" section of the college's weekly newsletter to all employees at the college (*distributed via email listservs and published to college's intranet website*).

The description is also included in the confirmation email that is sent to participants after registering.

Workshop Description:

Accessible course content benefits ALL your students, and creating materials that meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) is one way to make your content more accessible. For example, by applying WCAG 2.1 to your print materials, you can create documents that can easily resize to fit different devices, whose font-size is scalable, and can be read aloud by text-to-speech technologies.

This session will introduce you to some of the most important accessibility-related design decisions you can apply each time you select or create course materials (including audio & video materials, Word documents, PowerPoints, PDFs and webpages).

(Please note that this workshop **does not cover accessible STEM equations**, but accessible STEM equations is the primary focus of the upcoming workshop, "STEM Accessibility Online")

Goals

Participants will:

- understand the connection between Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) and accessible digital content.
- begin to apply their understanding of WCAG 2.1 standards to create and select accessible digital content.

MATERIALS

Reflection Note re: Digital Accessibility

All of the files created for and shared in this workshop are designed to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Materials that were created by the Teaching & Learning Centre include a statement of accessibility in the document header or footer; this is intended to be informative and to provide a model for participants to consider.

- [Creating Accessible Content: 7+ Design Decisions You Can Always Make](#) (Workshop PowerPoint; attached)
- [6 Student Persona/Story resources](#) (Word document; attached)

- Digital resources, including [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \[WCAG 2.1\]](#) (websites)
- Additional Supporting resources (websites):
 - [Tutorials for Making your Digital Content more Accessible](#). eLearning, Camosun
 - [BC Open Textbook Accessibility Toolkit](#)
 - [UDL for Camosun: Inclusion is not a checklist + Student Persona Resources & Activities](#).
 - [“Accessibility Check Points Guides \[\(1\) Images, \(2\) Word documents, \(3\) Video, \(4\) Audio\]](#)
 - [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#)
 - [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#)
 - [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#)
- (Post-workshop e-mail to participants):
 - Auto-captioned recording of the workshop session
 - [Applied-learning Opportunities](#): list of practice/applied learning suggestions for participants who are wondering about “next steps”

METHODS

Pre-workshop

(This message emailed to registered participants from facilitator 1-2 days in advance of workshop):

In advance of our online workshop session, I have attached a couple of resources (one PowerPoint presentation and one Word document.) We will be looking through these together when we meet, so don't worry if you don't have time to read/skim these before the workshop. I also encourage you to identify or bring digital materials (e.g. Word documents, PowerPoints, web files) of your own that you'd like to work on during or after the workshop, along with any digital-accessibility questions you have.

- **(Optional) Read or skim the attached PowerPoint presentation.**
- **(Optional) Read the attached Stories of six students** who will “accompany” us during our workshop.
- **(Optional) Bring a document, PowerPoint or web file** you would like to review and/or work on during the workshop, along with any specific digital accessibility questions you have.
(Please remember that that this workshop does not cover accessible STEM equations)

During Workshop

Workshop Outline

The numbered list below outlines the primary content the facilitator will cover during the workshop; the list aligns with the sequence of topics in the workshop PowerPoint.

While questions from participants are welcomed throughout the workshop, the notes below also include prompts for specific moments when the facilitator will invite participant input.

Reflection Notes for facilitator:

Get approval from participants to record the session.

Advise that the recording will be shared with participants after the session, and that it will remain available for 1-month. (Deleted after 1 month, downloadable if individuals want to save locally.)

Also advise that the recorded session will automatically generate captions, and the PPT file includes facilitator notes.

Remember to tell participants that questions are welcome at any time during the workshop, through the text Chat, audio or video. Invite participants to provide responses and suggestions for their peers throughout the workshop as well.

Remember to describe on-screen visuals during presentation (for those who can't see them, and to confirm context of the visual for everyone.)

[SLIDES 1-5]

1. **Facilitator: Provide territorial acknowledgement** to acknowledge college's location on the territories of Indigenous peoples and to express gratitude for their welcome, their generosity and their knowledge.

Reflection Notes for facilitator: *Continue to reflect on what a territorial acknowledgement means, the impacts and lasting harms of colonialism on people and lands, and the commitments we each make as individuals to build respect, relationships, reconciliation. Incorporate own personal reflections and learning into acknowledgments. Update and refresh with each workshop.*

2. **Facilitator:** Lead introductions by sharing own territorial background along with brief overview of own experience and interest in digital accessibility.
3. **Participants:** Provide brief introductions, share their goals for coming to the workshop and any accessibility-related experiences of their own they want to share.

Facilitator's invitation:

"According to your comfort: Through Chat or through audio, please introduce yourself and let us know where you're located at the college. What are you hoping to get out of today's session? Do you have an accessibility-related experience or question you would like to share here? "

[SLIDES 6-10]

4. **Facilitator: "What is accessible content?"** Provide plain-language overview of what we mean when we talk about "accessible" content. Content here connects inaccessible content to the medical-model of accommodations, and introduces participants to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), POUR.
5. **Facilitator-led discussion: "Why we do this work."** (Briefly) describe the process a student needs to go through to register for an academic accommodation if they require a specific content format, and outline how pro-actively creating accessible materials benefits all students. Includes brief summary

of students' experiences when alternative formats arrive late, Canadian Charter of Human Rights, and provincial accessibility legislation.

6. *Facilitator-led: "Who is this work is for?"* Includes introducing participants to some students' lived experiences (*persona-stories**).
**Invite participants to consider the needs of these students with each design decision. May prefer to focus on one student-story to begin with and use this as a lens for learning throughout the workshop.*

[SLIDES 11-21]

7. *Facilitator-led:* Focus on common file types used across the college (Word documents, PDF files, HTML pages, audio- and video-based content). Highlight 7 common design & formatting elements of digital files, show and apply design decisions that affect accessibility, address barriers.
**Input from participants here: specific files or file types they want to look at? General review using PPT, HTML and Word?*

[SLIDES 22-23]

8. *Facilitator-led:* List and demonstrate different Accessibility Checkers available to faculty and staff at the college. Use Checkers to test facilitator's sample files*. Facilitator and participants review accessibility feedback, apply updates, retest.
**Invite participants to test a file they are working on, share some accessibility feedback with group.*

[SLIDE 24]

9. *Facilitator-led discussion: *Invite participants to reflect* on what they learned (according to personal comfort), circling back to the goals/questions each participant identified at the beginning of the workshop: *Did you get the answer/information you needed? Do you have some ideas about what you will do next? Do you want to follow-up at a later date?*

[SLIDES 25-26]

10. *Facilitator:* Suggest follow-up tasks/applied-learning opportunities; share resources, information about upcoming workshops, and invite participants to join the peer-led monthly Accessible Education Community of Practice.

Post-workshop

(These files are emailed to registered participants by the facilitator, following the workshop):

1. Link to auto-captioned recording of workshop session
2. PowerPoint presentation, including list of background resources shared before and during the workshop.
3. List of applied-learning opportunities/suggestions for participants to try next. *(Include the suggestions shared at the end of workshop in this follow-up email)*
4. Open invitation to reconnect with facilitator(s) with follow-up questions, including to review applied efforts.

ASSESSMENTS

Reflection Note for facilitator:

Include options in post-workshop email sent out to participants.

Consider trying one – or more! - of these options next.

You are welcome and encouraged to connect with the facilitator one-on-one to review and discuss your efforts.

- Use one of the Accessibility Checkers highlighted during the workshop (or similar tool of your own choosing) to test the accessibility of a Word, HTML or PowerPoint file against WCAG 2.1 standards.
Note the feedback you receive, use it to fix an accessibility issue in your file or to expand your understanding of digital accessibility. After making updates, retest your file.
- Review the images in one of your files to see if they are supported by appropriate and meaningful text-based descriptions. Determine which images are purely decorative and which images provide content and context and will require a text-based alternative. Would you be able to describe an image in 1-2 sentences? Or do you have complex images that will require longer descriptions (e.g, on either a separate page or in the surrounding text)?
- Create a digital template (document, web page, etc.) you can use to create accessible content going forward. Set up your template to reflect all or some of the 7 accessible design choices covered in the workshop (e.g. heading structure, colour-contrast, spacing, etc.). Consider testing your template using one of the Accessibility Checkers noted during the workshop (or comparable tool of your own choosing)
- Review some/all of the digital materials you have selected or are considering adopting and providing to students and assess them using WCAG 2.1 standards. Your review could include using Accessibility Checkers or looking for evidence that the publisher has applied WCAG 2.1 standards to their materials.
- Consider attending our monthly, peer-led, Accessible Education Community of Practice. The group is facilitated by members from the Teaching & Learning Centre and the Centre for Accessible Learning. We meet online once/month and discuss a broad range of accessibility-related topics. Discussion revolves around the accessibility experiences and questions participants introduce.

FACILITATE & GATHER FEEDBACK

Post-workshop

The Teaching & Learning Centre e-mails registered participants a link to an online feedback survey; the standard survey includes the following questions:

1. What I learned during this event was relevant to me and will help me perform my work at the college.

(Response provided through Radio button selection; 5-point scale from: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

2. The event included an appropriate balance of content and participatory learning.

(Response provided through Radio button selection; 5-point scale from: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

3. Overall, the event provided me with a valuable professional development experience.

(Response provided through Radio button selection; 5-point scale from: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

4. Do you have any comments, praise, or suggestions based on your experience in this event?

(Response provided through Text input)

REFLECTION

Time & # of participants vs. content & engagement opportunities...