Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Inclusion and Universal Design (Accessibility)

CSC Training

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Assumptions and Inclusion

One of the biggest barriers to inclusion are the assumptions we make.

Students come from varied backgrounds and circumstances - no "one size fits all" (Just because it works for you doesn't mean it will work for everyone else).

Remember:

- Not all students have the same financial means.

- Not all students share the same cultural or religious reference points.

- Not all students have the same health or family circumstances.

- Not all students are fluent with the same language, jargon, or acronyms.

Challenging Assumptions

Before planning an activity, event or developing content, pause and ask:

- How might this feel for someone new or unfamiliar?

- Are there financial, physical, social, cultural or cognitive barriers we haven't considered?

- Are we giving students space to engage on their own terms?

An inclusive society shouldn't just tolerate difference – it should anticipate and accommodate diversity.

The more we challenge our assumptions, the more welcoming and accessible our societies (and Trinity!) become.

Universal Design for Learning – Three Principles

Universal Design supports key Inclusivity principles

Creating an inclusive and supportive environment that empowers students to thrive academically and personally.

Universal Design supports you to:

1. **Understand diversity**
   – By being aware, what do you notice/can't you see? Consider different realities and impacts on College life.
2. **Be mindful of different backgrounds, norms and expectations.**
   – By explaining jargon, expecting differing expectations.
3. **Promoting Agency**
   – By encouraging feedback - and how students can give you feedback.
4. **Committing to ongoing inclusive practices**
   – By accepting inclusion as a journey, with times of discomfort and relearning

Three Principles of UDL

Engagement

Offering choice and flexibility to stimulate and sustain motivation and enthusiasm for engagement - and Trinity!

Explaining processes/content, considering diversity, managing expectations.

Representation

Presenting information in different ways to support access and understanding.

Sharing accessible content, ensuring clarity of terms.

Action & expression

Offering options and supports so everyone can create, learn and share their knowledge and understanding.

Different ways students can engage and communicate.

Multiple Means of Representation

NB: presenting accessible information and content

Multiple Means of Representation

Representation

offer learners a range of ways of acquiring knowledge

How students deal with incoming information

In this cartoon, there are two children, each assembling a model aeroplane.

Both have speech bubbles:

➢ The little girl is looking at the instructions and is thinking through the steps she needs to take (Step 1: Assemble part A to part B, Step 2: Glue these pieces separately etc.).

➢ The little boy is picturing an aeroplane in his mind.

They are both smiling!

Accessible and Inclusive Language and Links

The most accessible and inclusive language style to use in online content is language that is simple, clear, and concise.

Easy to Read guidelines can aid in this process:

When using links, e.g. in emails, avoid using whole sentences or paragraphs, be concise and descriptive and avoid using 'click here'.
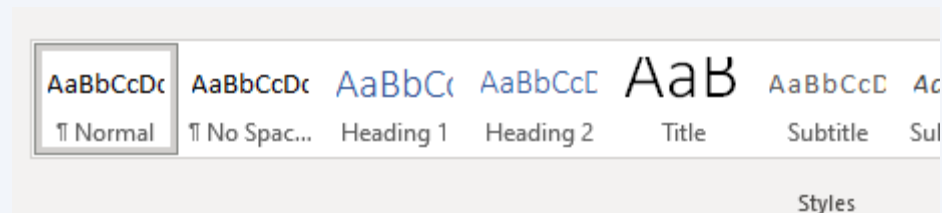
Layout: Headings

Following a sequential heading structure is a key element of accessible digital content.

Appropriate headings and subheadings aids general comprehension and is crucial for those using screen readers to navigate the content properly. (avoids the 'untagged pdf' warning!)

Adapt styles to your needs / preference but have a logic!

e.g.

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Fonts

✓ Opt for: Sans Serif Fonts (sans serif = NO decorative strokes on letter ends). Popular Sans Serif fonts are Calibri and Arial.

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✗ Avoid: Serif Fonts (serif = decorative strokes on letter ends). E.g. avoid Times New Roman

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Emphasis – Be Bold

✓ **The only accessible way to emphasise text online is bold.**

☒ *Italics* are difficult or impossible to read for the visually impaired.

☒ <u>Underlined</u> can be confusing as it often represents a <u>link.</u>

☒ <mark>Highlight</mark> or Colour cannot be seen by everyone and will not be emphasised by a screen-reader (if using, use in tandem with bold).

Be bold if you want to get your point across!

Colour Contrast

The difference in brightness between foreground and background colours.

For vision-impaired people and those with colour blindness – issues differentiating between red and green, green and brown, blue and purple, and so on.

NB: high contrast between foreground and background

NB: Don't rely on colour differences to highlight something important

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Alt-text

Alt-text is descriptive text about an image/GIFs which is posted on social media, on a website or placed in a document.

Alt-text is helpful for people who use screen-readers, to contextualise an image, and when an image does not load on some people's devices – e.g. due to poor internet speeds.

Top tips:

1. Say what you see: Keep it **simple and focused** on the details that are important.

2. On instructional images, you should describe the **process** which the image is communicating.

3. Alt-text is **not** for adding a copyright to the image, a photographer's name, or hyperlinks.

4. Avoid autogenerated alt-text, or at least review and edit!

Video Captions

- Captions are necessary on all videos for people who are hard of hearing or Deaf.

- Captions are also useful for watching videos with the sound turned off in quiet environments.

- For people with English as their second language, captions can aid understanding.

- Most YouTube videos have automated CCs – not perfect, but "it's better than nothing!"

Video Voiceover

- Voiceovers on videos are important for people who are blind or visually impaired to understand what's happening in your video.

- For text heavy or animated videos, voiceovers can also benefit those with English as an additional language, dyslexia and other learning difficulties.

- Ideally, voiceovers should not only describe any words on the screen, but also physical action, facial expressions, and sound effects.

- But main takeaway: Avoid videos which solely rely on sight.

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Thank You!

Any questions or thoughts?

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https://www.tcd.ie/equality/projects/inclusive-curriculum/