10 Tips for Creating Accessible Course Content

Janet Sylvia, Web Accessibility Group Leader

Note: These tips are a starting point for creating accessible course content; for additional information, please download *Section 508 Compliance and Online Course Content* available in the USG Accessibility Tutorial located at http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility_tutorial/training

1. **Accessibility Statement** added to Syllabus. Include: 1) Accessibility 508 Compliance statement; 2) Disability Accommodations statement; 3) Links to vendor accessibility information for specialty products used in your course.

2. **Semantic Structure (or Styles)** *always use* to create structure in Word, Open Office, HTML, etc. Heading 1 for Document Title; Heading 2 for all Section Titles; Heading 3 for all Sub-section Titles. Also, Strong (structural equivalent of bold); Emphasis (structural equivalent of italics). Other Style types are available, as needed. Table of Contents should be provided based on the Heading structure; Table of Figures, if needed.

3. **True Bulleted or Numbered Lists, True Columns, True Tables** always created instead of using spacebar or tab to create faux structure.

4. **Ensure Readability** divide large blocks of text into smaller more manageable sections, avoid complex sentences, use sans-serif font at approximately 12 points.

5. **Text Equivalents (ALT Text)** for every non-text element such as image, chart or graph. A clear, concise description 100 characters or less that is provided via Format Picture. If ALT text *alone* is insufficient, provide Long Description in surrounding text or as separate document.

6. **Avoid Color Coding** color alone is not sole means of conveying important information.

7. **Sufficient Color Contrast** between foreground and background elements. Also, background does not overpower text (e.g. PowerPoint, Web page, etc.)

8. **Descriptive Hyperlinks** must make sense out of context; avoid vague descriptions like Click Here or Email Me. Avoid using the URL. Instead, hyperlink text should describe the destination: website name, document name, or other resource.

9. **Accessibility Checkers**: *always* use the software's built-in Accessibility Checker (Word, Open Office, Adobe Acrobat, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.). Follow the Repair recommendations provided by the Accessibility Checker to fix errors.

10. **Multimedia** a) Audio-only: provide Text Transcript; b) Video-only provide Video Description (text description of key visual elements); c) Audio+Video provide Closed Captions, Text Transcript, and Video Description. Note: Combine Text Transcript and Video Description into one file.