Build in line with accessibility principles

Design and construction of learning materials should allow for access to the widest possible combination of students, including those with disabilities. Students with sensory or cognitive disabilities may require the use of assistive technologies to access learning materials. Design and build your learning materials with the following in mind:

- If learning materials are simple, concise and consistent then assistive technologies are more likely to be an effective student aid.

- Provide a text-based alternative to communicating with images, audio and video. This includes the use of alternative text to describe the content of images for those who are unable to see it, and text transcripts or captions when using audio or video for those who prefer to read or have a hearing impairment.

- Use clear fonts and keep paragraphs brief and uniform

- Be consistent when applying heading styles and page layout. Align your text to the left unless there is a strong reason otherwise.

- Minimise the use of tables and keep them simple in structure (do not nest tables).

- Test all web links to ensure currency and that the content targeted by the link abides by accessibility principles.

- Use consistent and logical sequencing in learning materials.

- When creating PDF files, ensure that the creation process produces text-based accessible PDF files as opposed to image-based (scanned) ones. You can tell the difference between the two types because accessible PDF files can have their text selected by clicking and dragging over it whereas image-based PDF files cannot. Microsoft Word has the ability to save documents to the accessible PDF format.

- Most PowerPoint slides do not meet accessibility guidelines. It is good practice to provide an accessible PDF or Word document containing the same content.

- Avoid using Flash as a platform for delivering content as it is not supportive of assistive technologies. HTML 5 should be used as an alternative.

Further information

The Centre for Teaching and Learning's At-a-glance guide to accessibility.

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