Tech Snacks: Accessibility Part 3

Overview of Accessibility Resource Services Process

1. Students with a disability (i.e.; learning, physical or mental) needing accommodations must complete and submit an application to the Accessibility Resource Coordinator (ARC), Johnna Antonich.

2. Students must then provide documentation of their disability. This can be in the form of an IEP/504 from high school and/or clinical documents from a doctor or psychologist/therapist.

3. After a student submits an application, along with documentation, the ARC meets with the student to assess which accommodations would be appropriate to meet the student's needs.

4. If an accommodation is warranted, the ARC will send an Accessibility Notification form to all the students' instructors, stating which accommodations the student is entitled to.

5. The instructor is then required to read, sign and return the form to the ARC office. If the instructor has any questions they are encouraged to ask before the form is returned. Accommodations go into effect once the instructor receives the notice, and they are NOT retroactive.

6. If the student is granted test proctoring accommodations they MUST fill out a Test Proctoring form. They will then take the test with Belinda Potter in the Library. Test proctoring can consist of a test being read to students if needed.

7. Any student enrolled in Accessibility Services MUST obtain a new Accommodation Request EACH semester in order for the accommodations to remain active.

Common Barriers for Our Students

Syllabi

Barriers
➔ Too little white space
➔ Inconsistent typeface (inconsistent paragraph formats)
➔ Lack of headings

Solutions
☐ Use 12–13 point sans-serif font (Malgun Gothic, Verdana, Tahoma, Calibri, Open Dyslexic).
☐ Use 1.5–2 paragraph spacing and 1" margins.
☐ Break text into small paragraphs (2–4 sentences at most); short, sweet, to the point.
☐ Use bullet points or numbered points.
☐ Use clear/precise wording of expectations (e.g., grading, material covered, due dates, required texts).
☐ Opt for bold over italics to emphasize text – the jagged lines can wash out text.
☐ Structure the document logically using headings and heading formats.
☐ Embed descriptive, discrete hyperlinks, rather than pasting full urls.
☐ Align the text to the left. Centered text makes it difficult to find the next list and justified text looks like one overwhelming block of information!

- ☐ Use a white or pastel colored paper (soft colors work best … not bright neon).
- ☐ Create a course calendar – as part of the syllabus or an accompanying document.
- ☐ Include an Accessibility Statement as well as a statement inviting students to meet privately with you if they desire (opens door for conversations).
- ☐ Watch this video on common accessibility issues with syllabi and how to fix them.

Brightspace Course Design

Barriers
- ➜ Expectations/assignments that are only announced in one location or different, inconsistent locations
- ➜ Inconsistency between the class lecture and Brightspace communication
- ➜ Inconsistency between the syllabus and other areas in Brightspace (e.g., gradebook or due dates)
- ➜ Lack of a clear outline of expected steps

Solutions
- ☐ Make sure text is in high contrast to background (black on white or white on black); avoid using multiple colors.
- ☐ Put assignment reminders in several locations (Announcements, in Content area and calendar by using due dates) or links to the Assignment in those places.
- ☐ Create a printable version of assignment due dates/expectations (e.g., in the syllabus's "Course Calendar" or a separate document alongside the syllabus).
- ☐ Record lectures and post in Brightspace for students to rewatch.
- ☐ Allow access to lecture slides in Brightspace.
- ☐ In Content settings, step by step instructions so the course structure is easier to navigate for users of screen readers and students with learning disabilities.

Assignment Expectations

Barriers
- ➜ Unclear outlines that are open to extreme interpretation or unclear boundaries and expectations
- ➜ Relying too much on verbal class lectures vs. text reading requirements
- ➜ Expectation of student's prior knowledge vs. what they are learning (assuming the student knows more than what is presented in class)

Solutions
- ☐ Give a detailed outline of what is expected on assignments and how those points are earned/lost (use **rubrics** whenever possible).
- ☐ Make sure the student has heard the information before – assignment language/format based on familiar subjects from readings or discussion.
- ☐ Express expectations in plain, everyday language that is direct; use active verbs.
- ☐ Consider setting flexible time limits and deadlines when feasible (this supports the learning needs and styles of all students).

Tests

Barriers
- ➜ Tricky wording
- ➜ Disorganized spacing
- ➜ Too many answer options

Solutions

- ☐ KISS (Keep It Simple Silly) by using basic words (i.e., replace "accessorize" with "build upon").
- ☐ Use easy-to-read fonts (listed above) and 1.5–2 spacing between paragraphs.
- ☐ Limit multiple choice options to 4.
- ☐ Provide a study guide or areas of importance that will be covered (focal points).