

IS THIS ONLINE COURSE CONTENT ACCESSIBLE FOR THE STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY?

Are there Power Point presentations with graphics or pictures on the slides?

The screen reader for the blind (JAWS, used on IUSB campus) will not read PowerPoint slides if they have graphics or pictures on the slide along with text. JAWS will read text only PowerPoint slides, although some blind students may prefer to convert these to word document files. That is a personal choice, and up to that individual if they chose to do so. Any slide containing a graphic or picture applicable to the information would have to be described to the student. If there is other text on the slide, it would have to be placed on a separate slide if the graphic is not removed.

What is the test format?

A test reads best if it is in a word document for the student who is using a screen reader for the course. Tests put on a PowerPoint presentation, for example, may not read completely for the student. Also it would be easy to miss a slide, as opposed to having numbered questions. The student taking timed tests online, (through Oncourse) may also require additional testing time. If this is not possible to do through Oncourse, then an alternate testing format may be necessary. For example, the blind student using JAWS to take an online test through Oncourse requires a great deal of toggling back and forth between questions, possible answers, and finding the right radial check box for the answer that they want to select. In this case, having the test put into a word document so it could be taken on a computer on campus would be the desired alternate format. The visually impaired as well would find it easier to take the test in this same format. Having the information in simple straight columns, in black type, makes it easier for the screen magnifier to produce a clearer image of the text.

Are additional documents scanned and saved on the Oncourse website for the class?

Most of these are probably Adobe files which can be accessed by most screen readers. However, a worn and old copy may not read properly. Also, any handwritten notes on the article or underlining or markings of any kind will cause the software to read the text near it in "gibberish". A clean copy is most desirable. Articles should be scanned and saved right side up, not sideways, with only one page scanned at a time and with no pages side by side. Including a link to the article is also desirable. The student could access it through the library if necessary. The DSS office could also scan the article to be sure it is in the correct format for the student. Again, it would be important to have a clean copy.

Are there additional websites that the student will need to access for this course?

A link to these websites would be extremely helpful for the visually impaired and blind. It is much easier to simply listen for the link and follow it rather than having to copy and paste, or trying to remember the address.

Are there videos or podcasts with this course?

The videos would need to be closed captioned, or a transcript provided, for the deaf and hearing impaired. Podcasts will require a transcript as well. For the blind and visually impaired, any part of the video which needs to be seen in order to complete or understand an assignment would need to be described. We find that developing word-by-word transcripts is a very labor-intensive process, and it's not always the best option instructionally. For example, if you have a video or a Flash animation that combines visuals and text, it sometimes makes more sense to provide an equivalent written handout than to provide a frame-by-frame transcript.

Does this course require the student to be in a virtual classroom for discussions and chat ?

This may pose a bit of an issue for the student with dexterity issues. However, with advance scheduling and notification of the times for these chats, someone could be lined up to assist the student with this process. For the visually impaired student, magnification software will allow them to participate. It may take them a bit longer to respond due to the operation of the software, but it will work. The blind student will find it impossible to participate in a live chat with more than one person. The student is able to listen to what they are personally typing, but knowing what the other users in chat are typing would require constantly starting at the top of the page and either listening to every message posted until they reach the end or toggling through all of the messages and finding the last posted. Either way, trying to keep up with an entire class would be impossible. The student would need someone to sit with him/her and read the postings in order to stay in real time.

Are all files labeled /named appropriately?

Instead of just video 1 or resource 1 etc, label the files with the corresponding name as it relates to the studies or assignments for that particular week. A visually impaired or blind student or a student with a cognitive impairment trying to access these files may have to open up numerous files to find the appropriate one. The student may become confused at complex layouts or inconsistent navigational schemes. Simplify the layout as much as possible, without changing the academic integrity of the course. Also, keep the navigational schemes as consistent as possible. The student may have difficulty focusing on or comprehending lengthy sections of text. Group textual information under logical headings. Try to organize information in manageable "chunks".

Color Blindness

Make sure that colors are not the only method of conveying important information. If the purpose of the image is to communicate something about the colors that are in the image, it would be necessary to provide that information in an alternative format.

Auditory Alerts

Make sure that audio signals are not the only method of conveying important information. For example, if a bit of music or a certain sound is used within an assignment, an alternate format will be necessary to convey the information to a deaf or hard of hearing student. An alternative assignment may also be necessary.

Dexterity Impairments

Because a student may not be able to use the mouse, it is important that all functions are available from the keyboard (tabbing from link to link for example). The student may not be able to control the mouse or keyboard very well, so do not have links that are moving. This same issue would apply to the visually impaired or blind student. A student may be using voice activated software. Again, all functions should be accessible from the keyboard.

The DSS office is available on a limited basis to conduct an accessibility audit of your course. You can contact us at 520-4832 or 4256 to request an audit. We recommend that you advise students of potential barriers to accessibility in an orientation or accessibility page within the syllabus.