Pod E: Content Delivery and Explanation

***Materials****: Electronic copy of course materials you plan to revise, copy of the accessibility information sheets for different document types.*

***Instructions****: This pod begins with reviewing the information sheets on accessible content delivery methods, then asks you to reflect on changes you would need to make to your course materials to increase accessibility on your course.*

You have each been provided with a packet containing information on making accessible course content following this handout. There are sheets for Excel, Word (for PC and Mac), InDesign, PowerPoint (for PC and Mac), Adobe Acrobat, and YouTube captioning.

1. **Determine** which of the technology options presented in the information sheets you use the most in your courses.
2. **Review** the information sheets for the programs you use in your courses. Make notes of some of the key points in these documents. What did you learn? What is most useful? Write down these main points.

Learned:

Most useful:

1. Think about a class session that you lead (maybe the one that your students find the most difficult or struggle with the most). What adjustments would you need to make to this session to incorporate the accessibility suggestions from the information sheets? Take notes and begin to revise the materials used in this class session.

Notes for revisions:

# Developing Materials

**Our students should be able to process and understand all of the materials we teach.** To this end, we must ensure that all of the materials we are using in and out of class, including lectures, readings, syllabi, etc. are accessible to all students in the class. Many students with disabilities will receive accommodations through the university to assist with adapting class materials so they are accessible, but not all. Some students don’t apply for accommodations because of the stigma or don’t qualify for a variety of reasons. We never know for sure who is in the room when we are teaching a class, so ensuring accessibility from the beginning will assist all students when accessing materials.

**Keep in mind that making classroom materials more accessible can be helpful to students without disabilities as well.** For example, a survey of UNC students conducted by the Digital Accessibility Office found that over two-thirds of students who used captioning on videos were using them for reasons other than hearing loss. Captions can help English as a Second Language students better process the content of videos, and other students find captions advantageous as well. Developing inclusive course materials will increase the accessibility of the class and aid the learning of all students

# Delivering Content

When delivering content, it is crucial to use language that is inclusive of all students. For example, we can include transgender and non-binary students through the introduction of correct pronouns and modeling the use of students’ pronouns and names. For example, avoid using gendered terms like “you guys” and instead use gender non-specific terminology. As we are in the South, “y’all” is a gender neutral plural term. Avoiding biased language related to sex, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability status, etc. is also critical. Many faculty, particularly those from the U.S., make use of culturally specific idioms in their classroom. Examples of this include: “hit a home run,” “get the hang of it,” “hit the books,” “pitch in,” “face the music,” “cut to the chase,” etc. Many international students may not understand the meaning of these phrases, and using them in the classroom can confuse or even exclude these students. Developing a feedback system for students to identify terminology or phrases they don’t understand can help instructors identify when their language is exclusive. Strategies for gathering this type of feedback include having an anonymous poll at the end of class for student questions or an open discussion forum on Sakai for students to inquire from their peers.

# Remote Learning Considerations

There are specific issues that can come up when teaching in a remote environment regarding presentation of course content.

**Pre-recorded lectures and content:** A common strategy educators use when teaching remotely is prerecorded lectures and other types of videos. If prerecording lectures, there are a few things to keep in mind:

* **Describe everything**: Everything on the screen, be that slides, figures, or other types of images, must be described in detail. This is to make sure students who have visual impairments are able to get all of the necessary information out the presentation.
* **Caption everything**: Recorded lectures and other videos used in the class all need to have captions to assist students with hear impairments, auditory processing difficulties, and English as a second language students in capturing all of the information presented in the videos. Videos sourced outside of faculty made course materials should have captions as well.

**Live, synchronous meetings:** When conducting synchronous classes, it is important to be aware of the accessibility options of the web conferencing software used in the class. Best practices is to enable both:

* **Live auto captioning:** Some conferencing programs allow for live auto captioning while other require manual captions.
* **Ability to “pin” multiples screens:** For students who use sign language interpreters, it will be important to know if the student can view multiple presenter screens at the same time, particularly when a screen is being shared, so they can see the professor and their interpreter at the same time. In response to increased use of these programs, the makers of video conferencing software are constantly updating and adding new features. Therefore, it is important for faculty to regularly check in with their IT offices to keep track of the most recent changes.
* **Option to turn off cameras:** Students may have a variety of life circumstances that make having their webcam on difficult. Requiring cameras on is an extra burden for students who are parents students who don’t live in “camera ready” homes, students who are neurodiverse. If students having cameras on is preferrable for you, consider exceptions and how to encourage students to participate, even with cameras off.

**Sakai:** Online course management software like Sakai are also an important tool for remote courses. Best practices in terms of student access are:

* **Post materials well in advance:** Ensure that all materials used in the class are posted on Sakai as early as possible so students who use accessibility software can ensure the materials are compatible with their software before they are needed.
* **Organization and clarity:** It will be even more important to ensure the Sakai site is well organized easy to use when teaching a remote course as students will have fewer opportunities to ask questions and receive assistance with navigating the site.
* **Consider using Lessons:** The Lessons tool in Sakai is a robust tool for organizing course content, assignments, and units. The styles headings are accessible to screen readers, and weekly Lessons pages can help students stay organized and up-to-date.