
DISABILITIES AND ONLINE CONTENT

While every student is unique and will have their own abilities and challenges, here are some general guidelines for the types of difficulties students with disabilities may find challenging in online courses.

HEARING LOSS

AUDIO AND VIDEO

Students with hearing loss, of course, cannot hear audio files or the sound from video. Transcripts can be provided for audio-only files and synchronized captions for video.

CHAT

Some students with severe hearing loss read slowly or need more processing time to understand what they've read. This can make chat systems difficult to participate in. On the other hand, for students with good reading skills, chats make group discussions easier because they can communicate directly with their peers without the need for an interpreter or other intermediary.

VISION LOSS

GRAPHICS

Alt Text or descriptions need to be provided for all pictures, charts, or other graphic representations. Focus on what is important about the image and what sighted individuals would learn from seeing it.

VIDEO

Audio descriptions may need to be added to videos so that blind students know what is occurring on the screen.

QUIZZES AND TESTS

Online testing may not be possible due to incompatibility with screen readers. Alternate arrangements may need to be made.

PAGE LAYOUT

Students with some vision may use screen magnification software. Make sure pages are well-organized, are not cluttered, and have good color contrast. Also, make sure the pages flow in a logical manner. You can test this by pressing "Tab" and noticing where the cursor jumps to. This sequence should follow a normal reading pattern.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

CHAT

Students with Learning Disabilities related to reading and/or writing may have difficulty with live chats. They may require more time to read and process than is available before the text scrolls off the page, or more time to construct and type their answers.

QUIZZES AND TESTS

Students who need extra time for tests can often be accommodated by creating a duplicate of the test with a different time limit. Permissions can be set so that the student who needs the extra time has access to the second test while the rest of the class sees the original.

PAGE LAYOUT

A cluttered or disorganized site will be difficult for many students with Learning Disabilities.

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

CHAT

A fast-moving chat may be overwhelming for some students with ADD/ADHD.

QUIZZES AND TESTS

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PAGE LAYOUT

Avoid flashing pictures, scrolling text, or other distracting items. Keep the site clean and well-organized.

MOBILITY DISABILITIES

CHAT

Students with limited use of their hands or arms will have difficulty participating in live chat rooms because their input method may be slow or incompatible (i.e. voice recognition).

PAGE LAYOUT

Students with fine motor problems may have difficulty clicking on a small button or input box. Also, if they use voice recognition for screen navigation, student will have problems with inaccessible web sites.