Accessible Facilitation: Considerations and Tips

When sessions are designed with accessibility in mind then people from a variety of backgrounds, abilities, disabilities, and learning preferences may be able to participate and contribute without experiencing barriers. The process of improving accessibility, by reducing barriers to participation, is iterative and dynamic, and always in progress.

Here are a few strategies that you may consider for improving the accessibility of your session. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and you may have additional ideas as well!

	In-Person	Online	Hybrid
Before Session			
Share Accessibility statement during event registration, and invite participants to share additional needs	Y	Y	Y
Share description, materials (pre-reading, PowerPoint slides) and resources, preferably 48 hours in advance	Y	Y	Y
'Pre-flight' room check for AV, building and room amenities, emergency equipment and exits, etc.	Y	Y	Y
Test room audio as facilitator and in-person participant to confirm clarity online	Y		Y
Test optimal camera angle and mark floor location for facilitator to engage with online participants			Y
During Session			
Enable live transcription in Zoom		Y	Y
Ask participants to identify themselves verbally when speaking their questions	Y	Y	Y
Record session whenever possible (Zoom record or Kaltura record)	Y	Y	Y
Read text aloud that is shared on screen or slides	Y	Y	Y
Describe visuals (on screen, flipchart, handout, etc.)	Y	Y	Y
Verbalize what is happening in chat		Y	Y
Save Zoom chat before ending the session		Y	Y
After Session			
Share resources mentioned in session	Y	Y	Y
Share Zoom chat and transcript files (remove private comments)		Y	Y
Share recording of the session with captions enabled		Y	Y
Share an updated version of the slides in PowerPoint format, if any changes were made	Y	Y	Y
Provide an opportunity for participants to share their feedback and / or requests for next steps in support of future sessions	Y	Y	Y

Session Materials and Design: Considerations and Steps

Consider how you typically ask participants to engage in your session – by reading, watching, listening, touching, speaking, or moving. Materials and sessions designed to reduce barriers help meet the needs of diverse participants, and improve their learning experience.

Here are some actions you can take to provide flexible and accessible alternatives to for those who perceive materials, or participate, in non-traditional ways.

Variable	Action	How-to and additional resources
Accessibility checkers	Use built-in accessibility checkers to evaluate your content against a fixed set of rules. Manually evaluate issues not detected by checkers, e.g., reading order, colour contrast.	• Check Word and PPT accessibility • Check PDF accessibility • Check for accessibility issues in Blackboard HTML content using Blackboard Ally
Colour and contrast	Maintain high contrast between adjacent colours, e.g., text and background, graphics, charts. Present information communicated through colour in an alternative form.	• Check colour contrast (WebAIM) • Learn more about contrast
Graphics and images	Provide a text alternative for images that convey information.	• Write effective alt text • Add alt text to images in Office
Handouts, flipcharts, whiteboards	Create accessible digital alternatives, e.g., Word, PowerPoint, web pages.	• Create accessible Office documents • Create accessible web pages
Hyperlinks	Create unique and descriptive links so readers know where the link is directing them. Use complete URLs when printing.	• Learn more about hyperlinks, with some examples • Create accessible hyperlinks
Language	Use plain language (no jargon or acronyms), active voice, and a logical reading order.	• Learn more about how language can support accessibility
Multimedia	Enable live transcription / captions. Publish captions on event recordings. Provide a brief description of a video, before playing it.	• Learn more about multimedia • Enable Zoom live transcription
PDFs	Use Word documents or PowerPoint slides instead of PDFs.	• Make PDFs accessible
Structure and templates	Use a prebuilt accessible template. Use consistent heading structure (H1, H2) to organize content into logical sections.	• Structure slide reading order • Learn more about structure
Tables	Use well-structured tables (no merged or split cells) to display data rather than using them solely for aesthetic purposes.	• More about Tables • Format a table in Word

How TLC can help

TLC Learning Designers can meet with you to discuss strategies and opportunities to improve the accessibility of your sessions. We can also guide you in choosing and / or using UFV's educational technologies. Contact us at asktlc@ufv.ca with "accessibility" in the subject line.