Build Accessible Coursework

Do you create classroom learning materials? Make sure all students can read them, including students who experience barriers to reading printed text. Whether you're a coding expert or a digital novice, you can improve the accessibility of the content you create for your students. Here are some techniques to help you:

Design for all types of learners.	Design materials so that they are simple, logical, and predictable. Use dark, large font (11 points or higher) that is easy to read. Lay out headings, paragraphs, and lists using your software's style and paragraph settings that can be read by screen readers, instead of using the tab and space bar keys. Create PDFs by starting with an accessibly structured Word document.
Insert meaningful hyperlinks.	Use descriptive text for hyperlinked content so that it's more intuitive for screen reader users. Example: Hawai'i Volcanoes is more descriptive than Click here.
Caption your videos.	Caption videos for students with auditory and learning disabilities. Google provides a good captioning tutorial for creating YouTube videos: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en
Minimize the amount of text on a page.	Make content more digestible by breaking up large amounts of content. Present homework problems and activities one or two to a page, or create multi-modal lessons—a combination of images and text on the page.
Avoid relying on a single sensory cue.	Make sure that understanding the content doesn't depend on being able to see color or hear sounds. Provide other cues as well. For example, in addition to labeling the misspelled word in a sentence in red type, put a box around the misspelled word or point to it with an arrow.
Add image descriptions to visuals.	Add descriptions or alt text to images so that screen readers can access images. Adding alt text to images is easy using tools built into Word, Adobe Acrobat, and PowerPoint.
Use available tools to ensure an accessible experience.	Confirm your content's accessibility with built-in accessibility checkers. The Tools tabs in PowerPoint, Word, and Acrobat include an accessibility checker that will scan your document (or one you plan to adopt) for any accessibility violations and help you correct the violations. Likewise, if you are designing a website, there are HTML tools and tools within content management systems that will guide you to ensure that your site is fully accessible.

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