Tips for Creating More Accessible Learning Environments

Hello, my name is Katherine Noren and I'm the Head of the Disability Advisory Service. At the University of Oxford we're committed to digital access and inclusion for disabled people, but here are some simple things you can do to improve accessibility that will benefit everybody.

1. **Explore the Centre for Teaching and Learning's Flexible Inclusive Teaching (FIT) pathways**

   The CTL's FIT pathways are designed to help you make your courses more inclusive, and to incorporate the next steps to implement them in Canvas, so these are excellent resources to start with if you're looking for inspiration for ways to improve student learning and reach more students, whatever their needs.

   In particular, the 'Introduction to Inclusive Teaching at Oxford' course will guide you through a range of practices from different disciplines to showcase how you can start to make small changes that will have a big impact on the accessibility of your teaching.

   www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/flexible-inclusive-teaching

   www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/an-introduction-to-inclusive-teaching-course

2. **Talk to your students and be open to making small changes**

   Create space to talk to students (and colleagues) about their accessibility needs and preferences. Let them know you welcome feedback about the accessibility of the learning materials and teaching sessions on your course.

   Be prepared to make small, incremental changes to the way you produce learning materials to make them more accessible – it's not necessary to get everything right all at once! For example, take a few minutes to learn how to create accessible PDFs, or how to add smart chapters into your Panopto recordings, and apply that when creating new materials — this could make a big difference to one of your students and will make the resource more useful for everyone.

3. **Think about the accessibility of the content you're producing**

   There are lots of tools that will help you to produce accessible content. For example, the Canvas templates have been pre-designed with flexible inclusive teaching in mind.

   Using Canvas and Word templates will provide a good structure and by following these, you're already a lot further toward having an accessible course.

   It's also a good idea to aim to make your learning materials available in one place, ideally Canvas, in advance of teaching sessions, in an electronic format that students can download and use flexibly.

   www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/accessibility

4. **Think about the accessibility of your recordings or online teaching sessions**

    Check your microphone and webcam set-up because good audio and video quality will really help students to concentrate on and engage with the content of the session

    Being able to see the speaker as well as the slides also has important accessibility benefits.

    If PowerPoint slides used in recordings are available for students to download, this can be really helpful for those who have specific needs relating to note-taking.

    Ultimately you might want to review previous recordings and ask for feedback you're your students.

    www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/creating-accessible-videos

5. **Make use of ORLO**

    Creating digital reading lists with Oxford Reading Lists Online (ORLO) will improve students' access to digital copies of their reading materials, saving time and bringing accessibility benefits for very many students.

    www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/orlo