



MOORPARK COLLEGE

Online Teaching Accessibility and Accommodations:

A Best Practices Guide

This guide is to help Moorpark faculty create an inclusive online course environment for all students, including students with disabilities. The guide was created as part of the CVC -OEI Improving Online CTE Pathways Grant project. Over seventy Moorpark students with disabilities contributed by sharing their personal experiences to help build the guide.

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Introduction and Research

In the 2018-2019 academic year, about 1,500 students self-identified as having a disability and registered for services with ACCESS at Moorpark College (MC). Students with disabilities (SWD) are students whose documented disability(ies) affect their access to their education. Although SWD are labeled on college campuses based on their impairments, faculty and staff should reconsider their perspective of viewing a SWD through the lens of social justice and diversity, by recognizing the social and cultural identities of the SWD and acknowledging the unique contributions a SWD brings to the campus (Aquino, 2016; Shallish, 2015). A social justice approach considers the inequities within the education system and seeks to address them through dismantling discriminatory and exclusionary practices that remain embedded in the system of education.

SWD are underrepresented in the workforce (NCES, 2017) and are attaining degrees at disproportionately lower rates than students without disabilities are (Francis, Duke, Fujita, & Sutton, 2019; NCES, 2018). The RP Group for California Community College found in their 2019 transfer study that SWD are more likely than students without disabilities to be stopped at the transfer gate with a completed degree or more than 60 units, without actually transferring. Therefore, the push to find practices for improved learning outcomes, academic success, and overall education attainment is significant for SWD.

The value of high quality online courses is greater than ever, and they can help all student populations, especially SWD who may be stuck at the transfer gate. A survey of over seventy MC SWD reported 81% SWD would find it easier to finish college if there were more online courses, 43% take online courses because they have a disability, and 34% feel that they do not fit in when they attend in person courses. This guide seeks to provide practical ways to improve pedagogy and curriculum to be more inclusive for SWD, which in turn can help all students through reducing barriers within the online learning environment.

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MC Online Teaching Accessibility Quick Tips



Make all course content accessible from the beginning. Be proactive, not reactive.



Use sans serif [font](#) (Calibri, Ariel, Helvetica, Tahoma, or Verdana) that is at least 12-point size.



Add [alt text](#) to graphics.



Post videos that can be paused and stopped, and ideally that have playback speed adjustment capability.



All [videos](#) must be captioned. 3C Media Solutions can caption for free, it may take 7 or more days, and the chancellor's office may run out of funding, so caption early in the fiscal year that starts July 1.



If a student with accommodations requests captioning for a live presentation, you need to request live captioning from [ConferZoom Tech](#) 7 days in advance.



Post descriptive [hyperlinks](#), such as “please check out Moorpark College DE Accessibility,” instead of “click here: [www.extremelylongurl.com](#).”



In word documents, use the provided [heading styles](#) in a hierarchical manner so that screen readers can easily navigate the heading structure.



Use the Canvas [speedometer checker](#) as a tool to see how accessible your documents are. The goal is green to dark green.

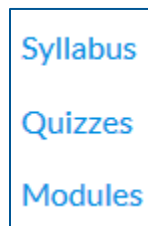
MC Online Teaching Accommodations and Design Quick Tips

Student Concerns	Student Experiences	Instructor Solutions
Receiving their accommodations	Some students report not getting their accommodations on time.	Remind students to request their confidential memos from ACCESS the first day of class to prevent last minute scrambling.
Testing accommodations	Some students become increasingly anxious as their adjustments have not been made for a test accommodation, and a test/quiz is coming up.	Input testing accommodations at least a week in advance. In canvas you can adjust students' time by clicking on "moderate this quiz." Select students with similar time extensions (such as 1.5x), then click the link at the bottom "Change Extensions for x Selected Students." Add time.
Test Completion Timeframe	Some students experience variable health (i.e. depression or chronic illness flare ups) that can be debilitating on a certain day.	Allow flexibility when considering the deadline to complete an exam.
Consistency of deadlines	Some students have unpredictable health concerns causing random assignments to be impossible to plan for.	Plan and maintain due dates and test dates to offer stability and predictability.
Duration of assignment availability	On good health days, students want to get ahead in case a poor health day comes up. Some students have anxiety with short deadlines.	Open modules and assignments early, consider an extra week.
Time management and planning	Some students have executive functioning limitations causing time management to be an issue.	Clearly lay out your weekly course requirements in a comprehensive syllabus so students can plan ahead.
Method of assignment completion	Some deaf students may have verbal limitations, so consider alternative methods of delivery in advance. This can also apply to students who have anxiety or other learning disabilities.	Provide options for students to choose from for assignments and projects instead of forced video or audio recordings.

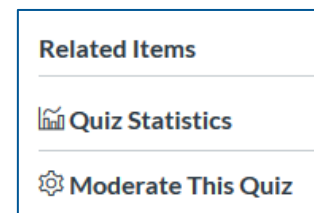
Testing Accommodations

- Testing accommodations are the most common accommodations in online courses.
- You must adjust the time for each test/quiz.
- How to adjust the time in Canvas:

- Go to “Quizzes” in Course Navigation



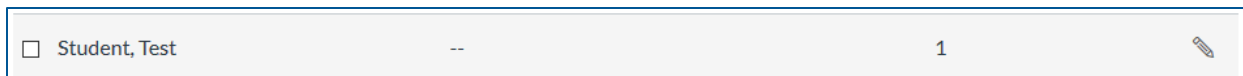
- Select the name of the Quiz



- Click the link “Moderate This Quiz”

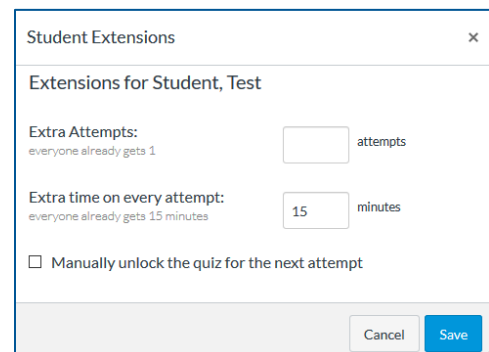
- Either find or type in the name of the student and click the pencil icon (edit).

- If you want to select multiple students with the same time extension, click the checkbox next to each name. Click the button at the bottom that says “Change Extensions for X Selected Students”



- Type the number of extra minutes in “Extra Time on Every Attempt” field.

- If the student has already started the quiz, you can click the clock icon next to the student’s time, and add the extra amount of minutes you want the student to have.



Fonts

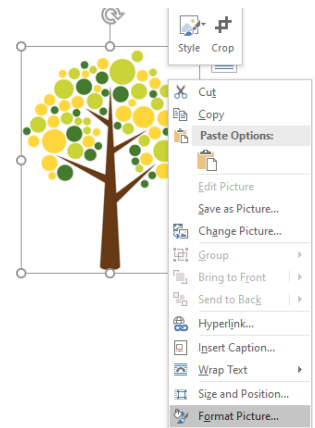
- The minimum font size is size 12.
- Use sans serif fonts. A few examples: Calibri, Ariel, Helvetica, Tahoma, or Verdana.
- Limit the use of font to convey meaning
 - Avoid bold, italics, underline, color, and all capital letters to convey meaning as screen readers cannot inform users of those font changes.
- Keep text separate from images.
- Limit the use of red and green colors, use text color with high contrast.
- Avoid blinking and flashing text (no more than 3x in one second period).

Alt Text

- **Alt text, or alternative text, is a means for screen readers to read the content or function of an image.**
- **Pictures, illustrations, images of text, charts, SmartArt, objects, and Bitmojis should all have alt text.**
- **Alt text should be succinct by using only a few words or a short sentence.**
- **Screen readers will identify the image so you do not want to be redundant by saying “image of...” or “picture of...” when typing in the description.**
- **If the image has no functional purpose and is used for aesthetics, it can be labeled as “decorative”**

How to use alt text in Word:

1. Insert photo and right click on the photo.
2. Click “format picture (object, image, etc.)”.
3. On a PC the Format Picture sidebar will appear to the right, click the third icon, “Layout & Properties”.
4. Insert text into the description box describing the image (no title is needed).



How to use alt text in Canvas:

- When you Insert/Edit Image, at the bottom under “Attributes”, enter Alt Text or click the check box for decorative images that do not need alt text.

Insert / Edit Image

Image Source

URL Canvas Flickr

Attributes

Alt text

Describe the image to improve accessibility

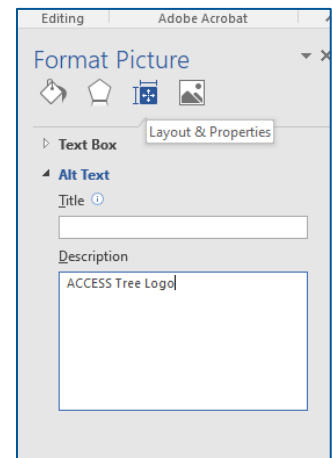
Decorative Image

Indicates the image is for decorative purposes only and should not be read by screen readers

Dimensions x

Aspect ratio will be preserved

Cancel Update



Videos

- **Videos should not be on auto-play, if so they should be able to pause, stop, rewind. Best practice: use videos with play-back speed adjustability.**
- **All videos must have captions. Best practice: videos should include both captions AND a transcript.**

How to Get Your Videos Captioned:

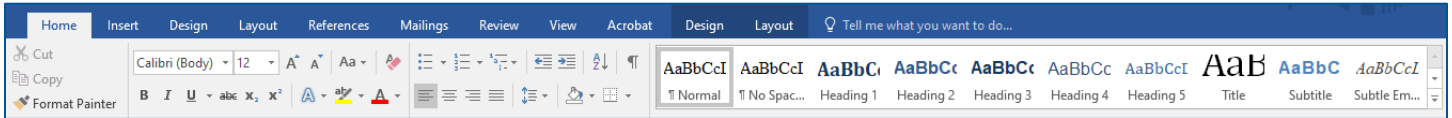
- YouTube (fast).
 - Upload your video to YouTube. Wait for captions to generate (around 30 minutes). Click on “cc”. Click “edit video” below your video, then the tab labeled advanced.
 - Underneath subtitles and cc for original video language, click English by YouTube (automatic). Click edit on Classic Studio.
 - Click edit on the top right. Once finished, click publish edits.
- [3C Media Solutions](#) (Accurate).
 - Must register and request upload permission. Can take minutes to a week or so to be captioned.
- [Canvas Studio](#) can also be used to generate or upload caption files.

Live Videos:

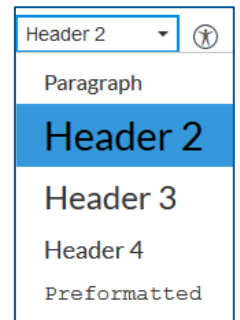
- Email [ConferZoom Tech](#) at least 7 days in advance with the name of your meeting, the Meeting ID#, the date of the meetings, and the start and end time.
- Enable closed captioning in your Zoom account. Assign the captioning role in the meeting.

Heading Styles

- In Word, use the headings provided in the styles pane within the home tab.
- You can update the heading font, style, and formatting by right clicking on the heading style and selecting “modify”.



- In Canvas, use the headings provided in the toolbar.
- Headings should be structured in a hierarchical manner.



How to Hierarchically Use Headings:

Heading 1 is usually a page title or a main heading. There is generally just one.


Heading 2 is usually a major section heading.

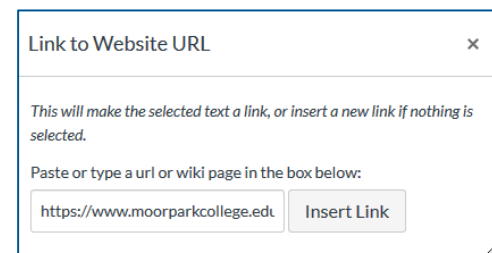
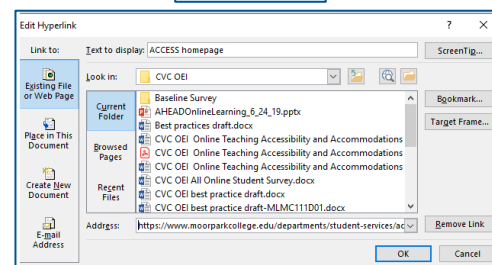
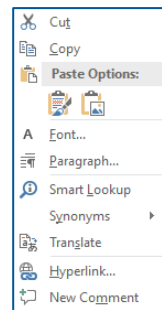
- **Heading 3** is usually a sub-section of the **Heading 2**.
 - **Heading 4** is usually a sub-section of the **Heading 3**, and so on, ending with **Heading 6**.
 - Do not skip heading levels (such as using a **Heading 4** directly below a **Heading 2**).
 - “Normal” in Word and “Paragraph” in Canvas can be used for regular paragraph text.

Hyperlinks

- For electronic documents or websites, all hyperlinks should be transitioned to descriptive text.
 - The descriptive text *should* describe the link location.
 - For example, [ACCESS homepage](#).
 - You do *not* want to leave the URL.
 - For example, DO NOT say here is the [ACCESS homepage](#) <https://www.moorparkcollege.edu/departments/student-services/access> .
 - The descriptive text should *not* include the word “link”.
 - For example, DO NOT say [ACCESS homepage link](#).
 - The descriptive text should *not* be the word “here”.
 - For example, DO NOT say for ACCESS’ homepage click [here](#).

How to Use Hyperlinks:

- Type the descriptive text you want to use.
- In Word, highlight and right click on the descriptive text and select “Hyperlink”. The “text to display” box should read the descriptive text. Copy and paste the URL into “Address”
- In Canvas, highlight the descriptive text and click the hyperlink icon.  Then Copy and paste the URL in the box.
- In both Word and Canvas, you can use the shortcut command Ctrl+K after highlighting the descriptive text.

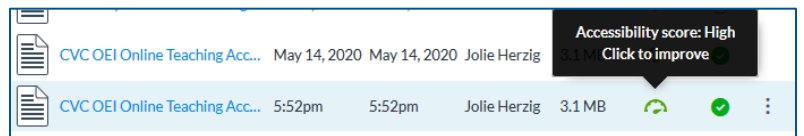


How to Check Your Work

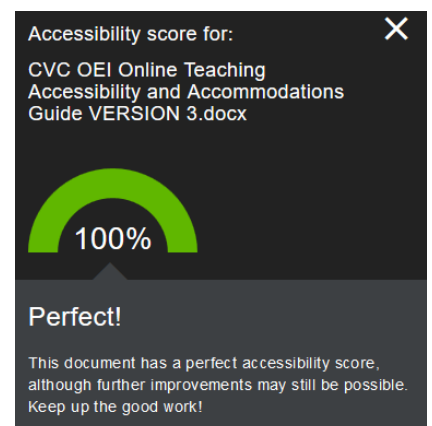
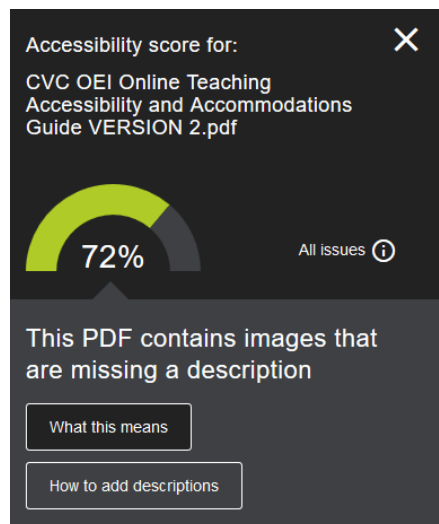
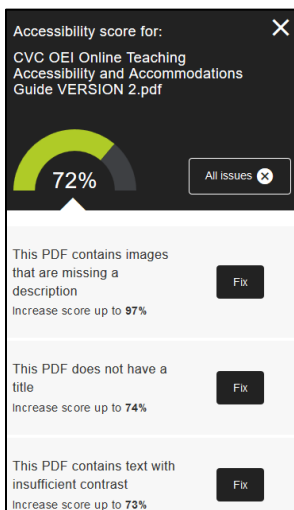
- Canvas has a great built in accessibility checker tool called **Blackboard Ally**.
- The goal is to have **100% accessibility**, with a dark green speedometer.

How to Check Accessibility Using Blackboard Ally in Canvas.


1. Upload your document into canvas (you may want to upload into a practice unpublished shell).
2. Wait about a minute for the speedometer to show up, then click on the speedometer to view your Accessibility score.



- a. If your document has accessibility issues, first click “All issues” to learn about the issues.
 - b. Next, click “fix next” to the issue you want to fix.
 - c. You can click “What this means” to learn about the accessibility standard.
 - d. You can click on “How to... [Issue here]” to have a step by step guide of how to fix the document. Be sure to click the software (such as Microsoft Office 2016) to get directions from the perspective of your preferred software.
3. Make the suggested changes in your document and then reload to canvas until you see a perfect score.



Additional Best Practices

- Follow the [CVC-OEI Course Design Rubric](#).
 - The CVC-OEI Course Design Rubric promotes student success through using the highest level of design standards and meets existing regulatory and accreditation requirements.
- Use the [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#) for web content.
- Check color contrast using the [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#).
- Explore ACCESS' [Information for Faculty Webpage](#).
- In Canvas, instead of uploading a file, consider copying and pasting the content to a page directly in Canvas. Then check accessibility by clicking the Check Accessibility Icon. 
 - This is a great way to make sure tables have alt text and row and column headers to provide navigation and context for screen readers.

Student Voices

Below are a handful of direct quotes from the Moorpark SWD surveyed:

What do you consider is the best part of taking an online course?

- No one knows I'm deaf unless I tell them. I'm equal. I also like work at my own pace.
- Increased flexibility in schedule. I can keep up with course work while at doctor's appointments.
- Flexibility in when I can do the work. I can work when my medication is at its best.
- Not having to do public speaking because I have anxiety when professors make me talk in front of the class for points. I like writing in discussion boards much better. I also like when some professors give you multiple attempts on a quiz or something because sometimes you make a mistake clicking on the wrong thing or get nervous.
- The flexibility of when you participate. Certain days I feel like I have better focus than others.
- Lowers my social anxiety, not too much pressure on socialization, class time isn't limited
- I like that I do not have to sit at a desk, which I cannot do for extended periods of time. I also like that if I am having medical issues or flare ups, I am able to still keep up at home. It is also nice that if I cannot walk that day, I do not have to show up, as I am still getting used to the fact that I need a wheelchair occasionally.

As student with a disability, what suggestions do you have for professors who teach online courses?

- Take into consideration that just because the course is online doesn't necessarily make it easier for a student with a disability.

References

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- Francis, G. L., Duke, J. M., Fujita, M., & Sutton, J. C. (2019). "It's a constant fight:" Experiences of college students with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 32(3), 247-262.
- National Center for Educational Statistics, U. S. Department of Education (2017). Disability rates and employment status by educational attainment. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_tad.pdf.
- National Center for Educational Statistics, U. S. Department of Education (2018a). Characteristics and outcomes of undergraduates with disabilities. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018432.pdf>
- The RP Group. (2019). *Transfer odds: Technical report examining factors that impact whether students achieve transfer or get stuck near or at the gate*. Retrieved from <https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/ThroughtheGate/Through-the-Gate-Phase-I-Technical-Report.pdf>