Tips for Improving Accessibility in Online Courses

What is online accessibility?

Students with cognitive, auditory, and visual disabilities should be able to appropriately view and use course materials like any other student.   D2L as a platform meets accessibility standards on its own, but any external content that is added to courses – images, videos, audio, presentations – should be carefully considered to ensure that students with disabilities can easily access materials in order to complete coursework.

Accessibility standards are also important to keep in mind since students with disabilities use a wide range of assistive technologies. Many of these assistive technology tools operate optimally when accessibility standards are taken into consideration.

If you are an instructor or teaching assistant who is responsible for loading content to your courses in D2L, below are some tips for making your courses more accessible for students with disabilities.

Please contact itsupport@pacifica.edu if you need assistance on how to do any of the below.

- **Include alternative text for images that convey important concepts.**

  In D2L, when you upload an image to a module, there is an option to include alternative text. Students using screen readers use the alternative text to hear a description of the image.

- **When adding any web links or files to course modules, use meaningful text that is descriptive.**

  Links that are descriptive are much more helpful to someone using a screen reader. Avoid using the URL address itself as the link text. "Click here" should also be avoided.

  EXAMPLE (TEXT FOR WEB LINKS):

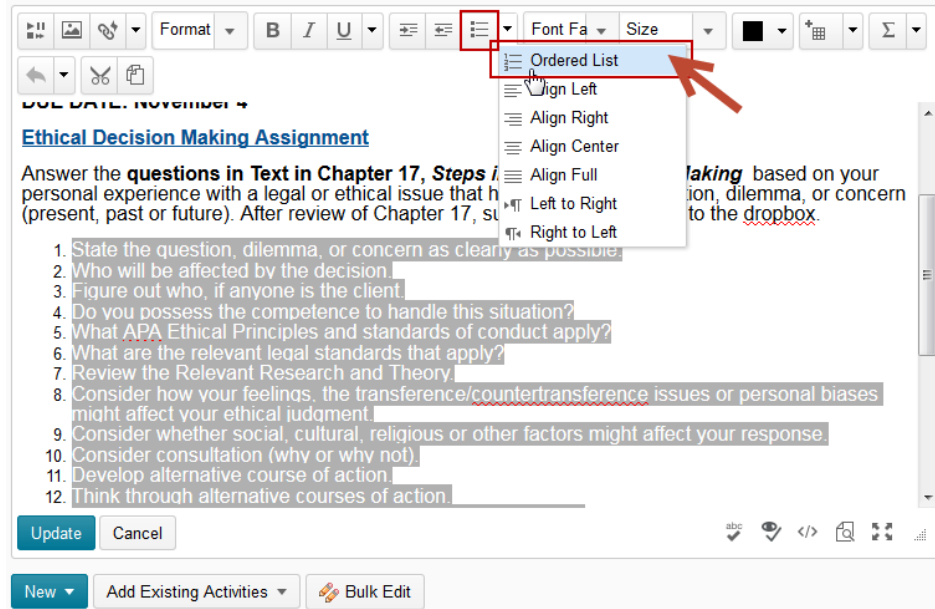 | |
  |---|
  | ✖ Review the Ph.D. Clinical Training Handbook **here.** |
  | ✔ Review the **Ph.D. Clinical Training Handbook**. |

  Any Word documents or PDF documents should also be descriptive - making it clear to students exactly what the file is. This applies to any electronic readings, course syllabi, audio files, video files, and presentation (Powerpoint) files. It is not sufficient to label something as "lecture file" or "reading for residential session" especially if there are multiple files within a module. It is often helpful to also include the file type whenever possible.

  EXAMPLE (FILE NAMES):

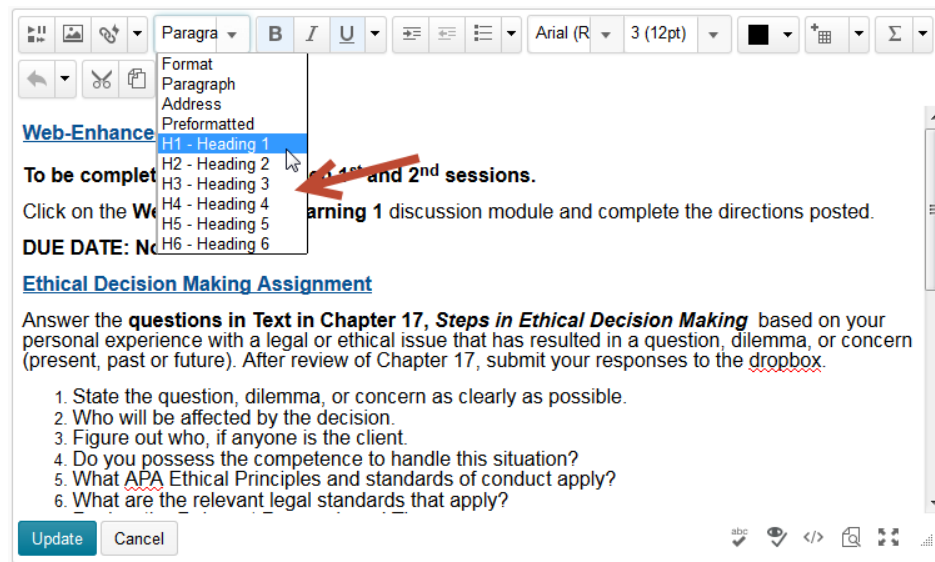 | |
  |---|
  | ✖ Lecture file421 – Jung xyz897 |
  | ✔ Module 1 Lecture.MP3 – Reflections on Jung and Dreamwork |

- **Use bulleted lists whenever possible to break down assignment instructions or text.**

    For students using screen readers, lists are ideal because when text is read aloud, they will be able to understand the text in context. Lists are also preferable because they keep things concise. Use D2L's formatting tools to make sure lists are formatted as lists.
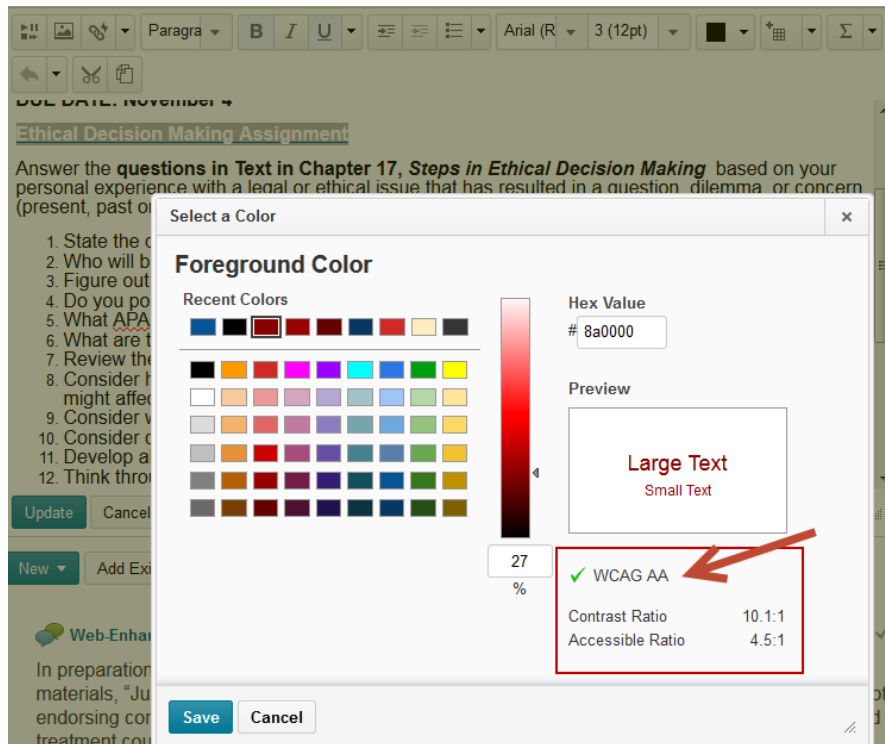

- **Use D2L's built-in headings to properly format text.**

    Headings must be used in the proper order for them to be useful for students using assistive technology. Headings break down large chunks of content and allow students using screen readers to navigate easier.

- **Always use D2L's color contrast tool when applying color to text.**

  Color contrast is important for students who may have visual impairments. Yellow text on a white background, for example, is not ideal. The color contrast tool will indicate what color of text is appropriate to use.

  It is important to also note that it is not effective to use color alone to convey meaning. For blind or color blind students, making use of headings and white space to describe the relationship among text, and keeping text clear and concise are more effective.

- **Provide transcripts for any audio files or video files.**

  Deaf or hard-of-hearing students benefit from having alternative methods of accessing audio or video files. Text transcripts should ideally include dialogue along with any important sounds that the student should hear in order to fully understand the context.

- **Use D2L's Accessibility Checker whenever possible when adding text and content to modules within your courses.**

  The Accessibility Checker will inform you of any possible accessibility issues and provides you with steps on how to resolve the issues. To run the checker, simply click on the *Check Accessibility* button in the HTML editor.

Web-Enhanced Learning

To be completed in D2L between 1st and 2nd sessions.

Click on the **Web-Enhanced Learning 1** discussion module and complete the directions posted.

DUE DATE: November 4

Ethical Decision Making Assignment

Answer the **questions in Text in Chapter 17,** *Steps in Ethical Decision Making* based on your personal experience with a legal or ethical issue that has resulted in a question, dilemma, or concern (present, past or future). After review of Chapter 17, submit your responses to the dropbox.

1. State the question, dilemma, or concern as clearly as possible.
2. Who will be affected by the decision.
3. Figure out who, if anyone is the client.
4. Do you possess the competence to handle this situation?
5. What APA Ethical Principles and standards of conduct apply?
6. What are the relevant legal standards that apply?

Update   Cancel

Check Accessibility

New ▾   Add Existing Activities ▾   Bulk Edit