



Communication Studies and Journalism Accessibility Study

General Best Practices Report

ABSTRACT

Highly visual or auditory course content that includes commercials, static images, movies, and/or television shows is a challenge to students who have impairments to their eyesight or hearing in Communication and Journalism courses. These tools are used to analyze both nonverbal and verbal dimensions and behaviors which connect course content to teaching tools used in the class. Our purpose is to allow students the ability to identify and perceive various communication actions such as eye behavior, gestures, spatial representations, verbal messages, etc. A part of this challenge includes our face-to-face and online classes. Essentially, we need to find a method whereby in our attempt to make content accessible, we do not provide too much description that it leads students to specific conclusions to the assignment. Too much provided inference would reduce the analytical and critical thinking aspects from the purpose of using such assignments for students. We want students to demonstrate what they have learned about visual communication, nonverbal behaviors, and auditory/vocal components (pitch, inflection, rate, pause, etc.). In this study we have identified specific tools that can be implemented in order to create a supportive and successful learning environment for all learners.

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Project Background

At our Communication Studies and Journalism SAC meeting on October 27, 2015, Jon Arakaki presented the SAC with an opportunity to develop a research survey and study to determine best practices in adapting to students with disabilities. The SAC was supportive in this research and Stacie Williams and Chris Kernion volunteered to participate. We provided an update to the SAC at our In-Service Meeting on April 26, 2016. The update included information about the accessibility of materials for assignments and exercises. There was also a request for faculty to submit more visual or auditory exercises so that the group can test them for any accessibility concerns. We will report our findings, resources, and suggestions for ongoing research at our Fall 2016 In-Service meeting.

Goals

The primary goal would be to develop a procedure for using descriptive details about images or auditory components (in order to make them accessible) central to course content that mitigate inference, so students may make their own interpretations using course material. We teach many courses that cover media studies and dimensions of verbal and nonverbal communication, including: Introduction to Communication, Gender Communication, Listening, Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Mass Communication and Society. Please note that most of our instructors in Communication Studies and Journalism use film, television, images, print, etc., as teaching tools, illustrations, and case studies. Our ability to meet the needs of all students will enhance not only the quality and accessibility of our online courses, but also the face-to-face classes. By solving the challenge presented by course content based often on highly visual and auditory content, we will be able to meet the needs of all student learners.

Best Practices for Assignments and Classroom Activities: Videos

Videos are frequently used in both the face-to-face and online course as examples and illustrations of human behavior and interaction, situations for analysis (such as video case studies), speeches or talks for critique of verbal and nonverbal delivery. The **purpose** for using video as a learning aid is to provide a dynamic example that more closely mirrors real human interaction, and takes concepts and theories off of the pages of students' textbooks.

Specific challenges presented by the use of video involve the following:

- The visual nature of video can illustrate nonverbal behaviors without corresponding description and/or narration of said behaviors. For example, a film showing [gestures commonplace around the world](#) without description of the gestures would be a limitation for a visually-impaired student.
- Many free resources and professionally produced film do not have existing descriptions of the video's visual components.
- The auditory nature of video provides students illustrations of vocal elements (for example, pitch, tone, inflection, voice quality, etc.) that influence communication, but a corresponding description of vocal elements is often absent from transcripts and captions. For example, a video of [Howard Dean's 2004 speech](#) with the infamous "scream" shown to discuss the vocal qualities present and the subsequent interpretations of that vocalization could be a difficult assignment for a student with auditory-impairments.
- Very few videos and films provide descriptions of specific vocal qualities with transcripts. [Screams] or [Applause] are examples of auditory components indicated in a transcript, but there is no description of the characteristics of that audio.

Helpful resources for some of these challenges include:

- For students with visual-impairment, audio description of nonverbal video elements for YouTube videos can be done using tools such as [YouDescribe](#).
- [Description Key](#) is a website with a lot of information about including descriptions of images and videos. The section of the website titled [How to Describe](#) offers recommended guidelines for describing point of view and narrative tense, timing and rate, music, ambient background sounds and more.

- For students with auditory-impairments, visual representations of sounds inserted into a transcript can provide a more dynamic experience. The article [Accessibility: Making Video and Audio Usable For The Deaf](#) has some useful guidelines and examples for making this happen.
- The PCC [Audio and Video Accessibility](#) page also has useful recommendations.

Instructional Approach Recommendations:

- Captions and a script for all course videos can benefit all students and learning style in the classroom. It is recommended that both options be available to all students whenever possible. For a Deaf student or any student who qualifies for captioning, an instructor will receive an email notification (attached) from DS. The instructor should follow the link in that email and list all of the videos the use in their class and DS and DL will get those captioned. The instructor should not release any modules with uncaptioned videos in them. They can be released when the video captions are ready, so that all students get them at the same time.
- If possible, provide students access to the video (and transcript if no captions are available) ahead of time if they would prefer an early viewing of the film.
- Contact the student(s) prior to showing the video in class or making it part of the online learning materials in a course lecture to discuss their preference for interacting with the film/video. In a face-to-face class, an instructor could offer to sit next to the student and describe crucial visual elements, or work with disability services to have someone sit with the student(s) to describe crucial visual elements.
- The instructor can write up or record a synopsis of the video's main points (sort of like alternative text for the video).

Best Practices for Assignments and Classroom Activities: Static Images

Static images (excludes GIFs) in the form of photos, advertisements, maps, infographics, diagrams, and models are common in Communication Studies and Journalism classes. While similar to video, the **purpose** for using static images as a learning aid is to provide students with an image to analyze then identify theories and concepts from the course that aids in their interpretation and evaluation of the image.

Specific challenges for visually impaired students presented by the use of static images involve the following:

- Images are entirely visual, based on both objective observation and subjective interpretation, and thus can be difficult to use as a learning tool where someone describing the image would need skill in separating the objective from the subjective elements of the image. For example, using two different digital ads to assess visual persuasion ([Advertisement 1](#) and [Advertisement 2](#)) can be challenging because much of the persuasion is embedded in features related to lighting, shading, color, and camera angles that are central to this form of peripheral persuasion.
- Complex images can be difficult because of the volume of descriptions involved with multiple subjects and features, as well as color, lighting, and placement of objects. For example, in an intercultural communication course when discussing globalization and food practices around the world the [images used to represent what a family eats](#) are not going to be adequately captured in alternative text (ALT text).
- Models of communication, and related relational models, can vary in their complexity and the value that an instructor might place on spatial/process knowledge of a model on an exam. For example, it is not uncommon for an instructor to remove the text of a [transactional model of communication](#) and ask a student to write in the appropriate names of the model components.

Helpful resources for some of these challenges include:

- This [paper](#) written by Georgina Kleege, who is visually-impaired, provides very useful insight into describing images to people with visual-impairments. It would be a good introductory read before working on creating descriptions for images.
- The Diagram Center has compiled a [handbook of guidelines](#) (including examples of what to do and what not to do) for describing photos, drawings, cartoons, diagrams, graphs, and tables. Their suggestions provide a solid set of principles for creating instructor generated image descriptions.

Instructional Approach Recommendations:

- For image analysis in the face-to-face classroom, consider providing the image to a few students who will then offer objective descriptions before the remainder of the class adds to the descriptions and then shares their subjective interpretations of the image.
- For image analysis in the online classroom, consider structuring the assignment to have students ask a few people not in the class to describe the image then offer their interpretations before ultimately the student does the same.
- For complex images being used in both the face-to-face and online classroom, the instructor can first objectively describe the image (orally, and also ideally via written transcript) then offer some brief context and anecdotal, interpretive information.
- When using models and diagrams in the face-to-face and online classroom, consider describing each shape and relationship of the model components orally (with an audio clip if online) while also providing the student a digital copy with ALT text. A [raised line graphic](#) of foundational models might be possible to create by working with [Disability Resources](#).

Best Practices for Assignments and Classroom Activities: Audio

Audio in the form of podcasts, radio broadcasts, or videos focused specifically on components of paralinguage (pitch, tone, inflection, vocal quality, vocal fry, upspeak, etc.) are used in the classroom, though not as common as video or static images in the Communication and Journalism classroom. The **purpose** of using auditory focused learning content is to provide examples of paralinguage for identification, analysis, and evaluation; or, to engage additional learning styles through engaging comprehensive and informational listening.

Specific challenges for students who are deaf or hard or hearing, presented by the use of audio involve the following:

- Elements of paralinguage might not be included in any available transcripts of the media. For example, this [TED Talk](#) which focuses on speaking so you can “sound like a leader” has captions but no descriptions of the vocal qualities on which the speaker centers their talk. In addition, this [example of Vocal Fry from *This American Life*](#) includes specific characteristics of the voice that have become divisive among the general public.
- Some sound effects and music as part of videos or podcasts might not be included in any available transcripts of the media.

Helpful resources for some of these challenges include:

- For information on creating accessible podcasts for students with hearing impairments, consult this webpage about [Accessible Podcasting](#).
- When constructing a transcript to accompany audio (podcast, radio, video, music, etc), consult the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) [Captioning Key Guidelines](#) for information about how to address sound effects and music.
- Resources from the Video section of this report will also be helpful for audio components. Specifically the article [Accessibility: Making Video and Audio Usable For The Deaf](#).
- This [graduate paper by Marcelle Hureau](#) provides some participant observer insight into an instructor teaching a public speaking course that included a hearing impaired student.

Instructional Approach Recommendations:

- Prior to using an assignment or learning tool that is dependent upon non-language based audio, send the assignment or audio/video clip to the hearing impaired student to begin a conversation about how the student believes they will or will not be able to learn from the assignment or exercise.
- In a public speaking classroom where aspects of vocal delivery is part of the grade, meet with the student and interpreter to collaborate upon an assessment approach that takes into account the use of a sign-language interpreter. But note, that some people with hearing impairments can (and might prefer to) speak vocally without an interpreter. If this is the case, you should talk with the student ahead of time to collaborate upon an assessment strategy for vocal delivery.
- For assignments with non-language based audio that is essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the assignment, audio descriptive captions to the transcript (assuming a transcript of the podcast or video is already available, otherwise captions or a transcript will also need to be created) that can be supplied to the student ahead of time so it can be consulted and then used in conjunction with the media being used in class.

Best Practices for Assignments and Classroom Activities: Multisensory Experiential

For this report, multisensory experiential assignments are those that require students to physically leave their learning environment and engage in assessing communication from both verbal and nonverbal behavioral components in public settings. The **purpose** of these assignments is to move students outside of the classroom to find dynamic examples of communication behaviors that can be used to identify and apply course concepts, to then evaluate the impact of those communicative behaviors.

Specific challenges presented by the use of multi-sensory and experiential approaches involve the following:

- Many multisensory assignments faculty have traditionally used engage the visual and auditory component of communication, meaning that some students are limited by one domain of taking in information.

Helpful resources for some of these challenges include:

- These resources already mentioned in other sections of this report address both visual and auditory impairments: [Accessibility: Making Video and Audio Usable For The Deaf](#) and [Audio and Video Accessibility](#).
- Utilizing a combination of resources presented in this report should yield helpful suggestions for assignments or exercises where both visual and auditory components are required to meet a unit or course level learning outcome.

Instructional Approach Recommendations:

- As an alternative to viewing and recording nonverbal observations outside the classroom, all students in the class could be offered the option to instead use a cell phone (or other device) to record sounds in the environment that are representative of related communication concepts the assignment or exercise is designed to identify and apply.
- As an alternative to assessing the typical auditory and visual components of nonverbal communication, all students in the class could be given the opportunity to instead describe smells, tactile sensations, or physical space (proxemics) to help them engage their non-visual and auditory understanding of nonverbal communication.
- The goal of any multi-sensory assignments should be to get all students, not just the students with visual and/or auditory impairments, to engage in multiple channels of verbal and nonverbal communication.

Publisher Accessibility

Please note that any interactive course content from a publisher should be tested by a screen reader tester, available through [Distance Learning \(Karen Sorensen\)](#) or [Disability Services](#).

McGraw Hill Education:

In June 2016, we met with Lisa Nicks, Accessibility Manager for McGraw-Hill Education, and discussed current accessibility updates being made to their products. The accessibility changes in the works will be complete for an initial roll out in July 2016 to introduce faculty to the new features and updates. Current, Connect, SmartBook, and LearnSmart do not meet accessibility standards, with some aspects being completely inaccessible with a screen reader, but the work being completed during the summer of 2016 should hopefully result in all three of those platforms meeting accessibility compliance standards. The highlighting feature SmartBook is being evaluated but will not be ready to roll out in July 2016. If you are interested there is a workaround until all updates are available. You can contact your McGraw-Hill representative to provide you with all test questions in a text file which is more user friendly for students with disabilities.

Many of the McGraw-Hill products are desirable for both the online and face-to-face classroom because of their adaptive learning features. Students and instructors alike have commented on the usefulness of the features in LearnSmart and SmartBook, but due to the current accessibility compliance issues it is recommended that even after the initial summer 2016 revisions instructors work with the PCC Accessibility Department to test digital content before it's adopted.

Pearson Education:

We met with Paul Coleman, REVEL Technician for Pearson, to discuss accessibility with their platform. Pearson includes a section on their website titled [Accessibility Information](#) and includes valuable information on using a screen reader, magnification tools, navigating with a keyboard, speech recognition, and REVEL interactive content. This might be a good reference to include in your syllabus or link in your online courses for students.

There are some concerns surrounding the Interactive components within the textbooks and the use of JAWS. We identified some interactive components did not work in reading the content but the content can be located in the content of the text. There were some identifiable issues in using the navigation bar on the left hand side of REVEL when trying to access textbook sections. There is a need to include auditory alerts when a student provides an incorrect quiz

response. The beginning of videos could include verbal descriptions to read the video title while the introductory music is playing.

Paul identified some areas that he will be trying to improve. We discussed the possibility of including an inventory of the interactive components within a textbook. Such an inventory will allow the testing to see which interactive components need to be described or provide alternative options for students. Karen Sorensen offered a suggestion to be mindful of time limits for students with disabilities and that instructors may need to be flexible with time limits. Overall, REVEL is accessible for students with disabilities but there may be a learning curve for students using JAWS. An update will be presented to the Communication Studies and Journalism SAC when further testing has occurred.

Cengage Learning:

Cengage MindTap was testing by PCC Disability Services in 2014. The testing focused on this e-reader platform and found that this is accessible but each textbook's accessibility will vary.

Sage Publications:

Karen Sorensen and John Hinman tested the Sage platform and reported the following results:

- Action plan: John (using JAWS in Firefox) was able to check the action plan check boxes, but the screen reader was not able to confirm a checkbox was checked (Usually the screen reader says whether a checkbox is checked or not).
 - While he could e-mail his action plan, the error message for not filling in an e-mail address was the same message for student's e-mail as it was for instructor's one. This is more of a usability issue.
- Quiz: All the questions types we saw in the two sections we tested were multiple choice or Yes/No questions. They were accessible, but again the screen reader was not able to confirm which selection he had made. He could choose it again and it didn't toggle off, which was good. He could submit his answer and get feedback, but he had to hunt around for it. Usually, it was clear what the correct answer was from the feedback, but it's definitely more clear if you are sighted and can see the red "x" for wrong and green checkmark for correct. Still, with some orientation, John thought he could use it.
- The summary feedback report could be read, but the e-mail button could not be found with the screen reader.
- Flashcards: Totally inaccessible
- Multimedia: Pretty good. I love how they offer a video, audio, and article for each learning objective. All the audio links, though, were broken links to a NPR recording

that's no longer posted. NPR has some accessibility issues (their play button is not labeled, so the student will need sighted help to know which one it is.)

- Journal articles from Sage: Article is a PDF that could only be downloaded when John changed to a different screen reader (NVDA) and then the PDF was not tagged, so it was readable, but it lacks formatting which definitely helps with comprehension especially if you can't see the document.

Key Findings

- Many of our assignments and class activities are multisensory, thus creating opportunities for all students to participate (with potential variation)
- Faculty-student interaction is key to facilitating accessibility in a respectful and inclusive approach
 - Contacting a student prior to an in-class activity to ask for input on participation that best meets the needs of the student
 - Consulting the student outside of class time about any obstacles to completing the assignment, and developing some suitable alternatives
- Communication Studies and Journalism courses should consider including a learning unit on deaf and blind culture to help challenge stereotypes and prejudice in both interpersonal/group interaction and media representations.
 - This unit would also help to lead students through an exploration of power, privilege, and inequity by understanding ableism.
- There was a point made about considering a different way that students can interpret work in assignments. The idea of Description (fact based content) vs. Interpretation can assist faculty with assignments. We can provide clear oral and/or written descriptions of assignments and then allow students to develop their own interpretations or findings.
- An idea was shared to have a list of alternative assignments as options for all students rather than just accommodating a few students.
 - For instance, if an assignment is using a video clip, we can consider including an audio clip as an alternative for all students. The key for this suggestion is to make sure that both options are meeting the intended outcomes for the assignment and the course.
- If we are having students analyze the angle of a camera position within a video then we can also include a glossary of terms to facilitate student success.
- When we are creating assignments in our courses, a good question to ask is: Would a student with a visual or hearing impairment have the same accessibility to the assignment as the rest of the class? We can ask this question for already established assignments and future assignment development.
- We discussed creating a SAC accessible assignment repository so faculty can submit and choose accessible assignments for their courses. We have a Desire2Learn shell with assignments created and will be revising this for future SAC use.
- For all images we use in face-to-face and online classes it is important to use “Alt Text” and create a clear description of what the image represents.

- We also discussed an opportunity to have some nonverbal elements such as Emblems and Facial Displays embossed or available braille for students with visual impairments. There was also the idea of creating 3-D printing options for facial displays and expressions.
- Faculty may also consider adding sounds to graphs that may assist in illustrating trends.
- In terms of certain assignments that focus solely on visual elements, consider including a more multi-sensory assignment. For instance, if students are to critique visual elements of delivery, students with visual impairments may also achieve the assignment outcomes by critiquing the speaker's tone, rate of speech, and also where the speaker is directing their delivery. Students with visual impairments may be able to identify if a speaker is standing sideways and not establishing direct attention to the audience.
- A suggestion for nonverbal communication assignments is to include more elements for all students to evaluate. Additional elements to consider including can be the temperature of the environment, acoustics, and olfactics, or the sense of smell. This can provide a different perspective from students and create a more robust analysis.
- When we show films or clips in face-to-face and online classes from YouTube, state that there may be an advertisement before actual film or clip we show to the class. This can help students with visual or hearing impairments delineate between the advertisement and actual assignment section.
- When incorporating advertisements, make sure to include the specific name of the advertisement in the directions.
- Faculty may use www.youdescribe.org which allows you to pause and add descriptions to YouTube videos. This may take some additional time but it may add more accessibility for students with disabilities.
- Communication Studies and Journalism courses are well situated to address the assumptions and prejudice that exists towards people with physical and cognitive impairments. Throughout the course of this project, conversations with the project team about accessibility and cultural assumptions and societal norms led to the conclusion that the content area of most of the courses could adapt a lecture, classroom activity, reading, or assignment that would help challenge the assumptions and prejudice of people with physical or cognitive impairment.

Closing Thoughts

Although this study is concluding on paper, we are taking an active approach to communicating this information to our Communication Studies and Journalism SAC. The hope is that our colleagues adopt some of the recommendations in their own teaching. Many times, when receiving an accommodation request from PCC Disability Services, an instructor may feel they have to scramble at the last minute to try and develop an assignment or multiple assignments for the student. Our hope is that we take a more holistic approach to our teaching to accommodate all student learners rather than waiting for an accommodation request. Instead of taking a reactive approach to accommodations, we can be proactive in developing and revising our courses so that we meet the outcomes of the assignment, course, and PCC's core outcomes. If we can revise assignments and teaching strategies, then we have tools in place that will assist in our teaching and meeting the needs of all our students.

An important guiding principle to highlight in this closing includes the effort to advocate for instructors to have interactive content tested early, rather than waiting for an accommodation request. Preparing early can create a more cohesive and robust course, allowing for various perspectives to be communicated in assignments and discussions. By doing this we can meet the needs of diverse students that learn in different ways. You can contact [PCC Disability Services](#) to set up a time for the testing of your interactive content.

Finally, this study has identified specific tools for the Communication Studies and Journalism faculty to aid in their teaching. If we can meet all student learning needs then our courses can encourage more rich and diverse discussions and perspectives.

Appendices

APPENDIX A FURTHER RESOURCES

- ***Accessible Podcasting***
For information on creating accessible podcasts for students with hearing impairments, consult this webpage about [Accessible Podcasting](#).
- ***The Arc***
[The Arc](#) has some interesting information for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Once at the homepage you can place your cursor over Who We Are and scroll down to the [Media Center](#) for videos and other information. The section on [People First Language](#) section when discussing language use in Interpersonal Communication can be a good area to introduce. There is a section titled Representation in the Media within this page. In a Perception lecture you can discuss in class or embed the Video, [Adrian, the Aspiring Actor](#) to reference many stigmas that people with disabilities face.
- ***Audio Description Project***
This [website](#), an initiative of the American Council of the Blind, provides lists of media (movies, TV shows, stream services), performing arts, and museums and tours that offer audio description. If you are looking for a feature film or TV show with audio description, this would be a good resource to consult because how to access the audio described version is provided.
- ***Description Key***
This [website](#) has many useful guidelines for what to describe and how to describe it in visually based media. The section of the website titled [How to Describe](#) offers recommended guidelines for describing point of view and narrative tense, timing and rate, music, ambient background sounds and more. When constructing a transcript to accompany audio (podcast, radio, video, music, etc.), consult the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) [Captioning Key Guidelines](#) for information about how to address sound effects and music.
- ***Diagram Center***
The [Diagram Center](#) has the goal of “supporting different learning needs with emerging technologies and community engagement.” Their [website](#) has a lot of resources on image and video description, 3D printing for haptic learning, and research on new approaches to teaching and learning. The [Image Description Guidelines](#) are detailed and full of examples. You can also read a [handbook of guidelines](#) (including examples of what to do and what not to do) for describing photos, drawings, cartoons, diagrams,

graphs, and tables. Their suggestions provide a solid set of principles for creating instructor generated image descriptions.

- ***Media and Disability Resources***

The [homepage](#) provides information on disability in the media. The site can be used by anyone interested in disability studies and disability activists. The [films, T.V. and documentaries](#) page provides a listing of several films, including *Music Within* and TV shows such as *Breaking Bad*, *Legit* and *Growing Up Fisher*, and even Reality TV. You will be able to find positive examples that break traditional stereotypes of individuals with disabilities.

- ***The National Center on Disability and Journalism***

The [National Center on Disability and Journalism](#) provides some interesting resources and there is a section on [Resources for Educators](#) that has a video about The Americans with Disabilities Act.

- ***PCC Accessibility for Online Course Content***

This [PCC Accessibility page](#) provides step-by-step guides for instructors to make course content accessible.

- ***PCC Disability Services***

[Disability Services](#) at Portland Community College works to ensure students who experience disability have an equal opportunity to participate in educational and co-curricular offerings. On this site you can locate information about services for students and also faculty resources for the classroom. The PCC [Audio and Video Accessibility](#) page also has useful recommendations. You can also visit the [Complex Image Accessibility](#) page for useful tools in creating accessible complex images.

- ***PCC Disability Services Spaces Page***

On the [Disability Services Spaces Page](#) there are links and connections to our public facing pages with similar information, but most of these pages are for internal use by PCC personnel. They give us a place to record the current as well as the past or future plans and share them with the broader community of staff, faculty, and students.

- ***Reel Abilities***

[ReelAbilities](#) Film Festival brings together the community to promote awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different abilities. ReelAbilities Film Festival showcases films, conversations and artistic programs to explore, embrace, and celebrate the diversity of our shared human experience.

- ***You Describe***

Faculty may use www.youdescribe.org which allows you to pause and add descriptions

to YouTube videos. This may take some additional time but it may add more accessibility for students with disability.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESULTS

The complete survey and results can be accessed via this link: [Survey Results](#)

Summary of Survey Results

In order to address our primary goal of developing a procedure for using descriptive details about images or auditory components central to course content, we decided to gather preliminary information by administering a short survey to faculty members in the Communication Studies and Journalism SAC. With the assistance of four campus chairpersons, the survey instrument was sent out via e-mail, and we received a total of 25 responses, including those of the three authors of this study.

The most frequent audio-visuals utilized were videos (N=23), photos (N=20), audio clips (N=15), graphs and charts (N=12), and diagrams (N=10). Primary methods of delivering this content was Microsoft Word and/or PowerPoint (N=20), printed copy (N=13), and D2L/HTML (N=12). Of those who utilize this content, most (N=21) create it themselves. This factor emphasizes the need for guidelines to help faculty members navigate the use of these “tools” in a manner that makes them accessible for all students.

Materials used in the courses come from a variety of sources, including instructor generated materials (N=24), openly available resources such as YouTube and other websites (N=22), commercial publishers (N=17), and library materials (N=13). The most common content type from the commercial publishers include assessments (N=10), question test banks (N=9), and publisher websites (N=9).

Typically, instructors in our SAC assess their students through research and analysis papers (N=24), presentations (N=22), discussions (N=21), tests/quizzes (N=19), and video analysis (N=18). Most of the instructors who answered this question (N=16) have had to modify course content to accommodate a student with a disability. Modifications include closed-captioned videos, screen-reader access, and making content “braille” compatible.

Overall, based on the results of the survey, it is apparent that Communication Studies and Journalism instructors are delivering content and assessing students in a variety of ways, and have had to modify this content in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Thus, justifying the need to provide resources, research, and general guidelines. The results also indicate a need to work with textbook publishers who provide their own platforms, in order to help ensure content is accessible for all students.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Below are two assignments that we have identified as providing clear course outcome learning objectives and offers clear descriptive language. These assignments provide all learners with the ability to meet the assignment and course outcomes. The assignments include the use of descriptive language to communicate the assignment directions without leading students to specific answers within the assignment. These are designed to allow the instructor the ability to evaluate the student's ability to reflect on their own learning of the concepts.

Sample Assignment 1

Nonverbal Questionnaire Exercise

For this exercise you may either click on the attachment or read the directions for the assignment in the box below. Please make sure to submit the assignment by the due date listed. This exercise is worth up to 5 points.

Purpose: To show the importance of nonverbal elements to the individual and others. You should be able to identify nonverbal codes and why we choose them. You will be able to provide your own interpretation of why you and others choose certain nonverbal codes. This will provide you an opportunity to practice interpreting various nonverbal codes.

Directions: Please offer a brief response to each set of questions listed below. Please remember that the responses are your own interpretations. I will be looking for how you explain your ideas so please make sure to offer examples and descriptions.

1. Look around the room and/or sense the environment in which you are sitting. Regarding its nonverbal properties, how optimally does it facilitate your learning? You may want to consider the Temperature, Acoustics, Olfactics (smell), or volume within the environment.
2. How mindful are you about the way you dress, wear your hair, do your makeup, wear perfume or cologne, or deodorant? What messages are you intentionally sending? To what extent do the people in your group receive your message accurately?
3. Think about your apartment or house. How do you decorate it, arrange furniture or place decorations, or use of air fresheners? What messages are you intentionally trying to send?
4. Consider some famous celebrities, politicians, etc. How do they communicate nonverbally to make themselves stand out of the crowd? Please consider not only their appearance but also Paralanguage which includes tone of voice, rate of speech, vocal variation, or pausing.

Sample Assignment 2

Directed Time Without Disruptions

This discussion is designed for you to:

- Bring awareness to your distractions while listening.
- Practice strategic times disruptions to improve your listening skills.

Instructions:

1. Watch this TED Talk by Julian Treasure: [5 Ways to Listen Better](#)
2. Complete all parts indicated below; A, B, and C.
3. Post your response to part C in a new thread. Once you've posted you'll be able to see others' posts (as long as you are not the first to post). Respond to two of your peers- preferably someone who had a similar and someone who had a different experience from you.

Part A:

- Set aside 15 minutes for a deliberate time without disruptions. Rules: no cell phones, no talking to people, and no listening to your iPod.
- Try to dismiss any worries or frustrations from your mind.

Part B:

- Conduct some research to find one source/article that talks about deliberate times of quiet/silence, or meditation.

Part C:

- Respond to the following questions:
- What were the challenges you faced during your time of quiet?
- How might something like a deliberate moment of quiet each day change your listening? (Here you should include a link or citation to the research conducted in Part B).

APPENDIX D

LEARNING MODULE IDEAS

- Media representations that are ableist versus inclusive.
- Readings specific to deaf and/or blind culture with specific in-class discussion questions about perception, prejudice, and cultural norms.
 - Could be interesting to explore various cultural views about people with physical and cognitive impairments.
- Create learning content that combines research with interviews from people within the community.
- Create an experiential assignment to help increase both affective and cognitive empathy.