Online Instructional Design Concepts
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INTRODUCTION

This module is designed to provide instruction on how to transfer a traditional class to one that is online. It will provide a step-by-step guide on how to create a course using sound instructional design concepts.

This learning guide is intended to serve as a reference upon the completion of the module.

GOALS

After this workshop is complete, the user will have:

- Reviewed an example of a course designed in Sakai and Laulima.
- Seen examples of things to avoid when designing their course.
- Learned how to make their course ADA compliant.

DEFINING SOUND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

A key to creating an effective online course is to use sound instructional design. This includes focusing on the organization of your materials, giving your students clear goals, encouraging student participation, etc. For more information, please refer to the handout entitled: 17 Elements of Good Online Courses.

However, sound instructional design also means creating an aesthetically pleasing and easy to use course. Here are some things to keep in mind when designing your course:

- Maintain a clean layout where things are easy to find.
- Use meaningful names for things, i.e., instead of “Test 1” reference the subject being assessed such as “Test 1: Linear Programming.”
- Try to be consistent with course layout (i.e., if you have an introduction and lesson in Chapter 1 you should have an introduction and lesson in Chapter 2, etc.), fonts, use of graphics, etc.
- “Chunk up” your chapters or units into individual content modules, or in separate folders in Resources, rather than placing everything in one big intimidating content module, etc.
- Make sure external and internal links work correctly.

EXERCISE 1 – LOGGING ON TO LAULIMA

1. Open the browser of your choice.
2. In the URL address or location field, enter the Laulima server address provided by your instructor.
3. In the top right-hand corner of the browser window, click on the Login link.
4. Enter your UH user ID and password, then click the Login button.
   - The My Workspace screen will open.
EXERCISE 2 – REVIEW AN ONLINE EXAMPLE

To help illustrate this unit you will be visiting an online course that demonstrates some of these concepts.

1. In the My Workspace area in the blue course tabs bar at the top of the page, click on the Demo_cynthiae_01_Dev link.
   - The Homepage appears.
   - Note: Email cynthiae@hawaii.edu if link is not available in the course tabs bar.

2. On the Homepage, on the left-hand side of the screen, click on the Modules link.
   - The Modules screen appears.

3. Click on the Effective Online Instructional Design link.
   - The Effective Online Instructional Design module screen appears.

4. Click on the Course Examples link.
   - The link automatically goes to the URL located at:
     http://testdrivesakai.com/portal/site/762ff388-5fa5-4c3b-006e-9740c5dc9bad
   - The Sakai 2.4.X Test Drive login page appears in a new browser window.

5. Enter the following:
   - user ID: uhhguest
   - password: laulima

6. In the blue course tabs bar at the top of the My Workspace page, click on the Biology_101_1_Summer_2007 link.
   - The Biology 101 example course appears.
   - Notice how Laulima helps to keep course layout clean and easy to navigate.

7. Look at the course menu running down the left-hand side.
   - Because this is a course designed to be used as a sample the author has added a lot of tools. You can have as few or as many tools as you think is necessary for your course. But keep in mind that you should only include those tools that add value to your course.
   - It would be helpful to have the tools in alphabetical order (excluding the syllabus, which should be under “Home,” so they can be found quickly).

8. When finished reviewing the course, click the Logout link in the top right-hand corner of the screen.

9. Close the browser window.
   - The Example of a Course Designed in Sakai screen reappears.
EXERCISE 3 – REVIEW INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN TIPS FOR ONLINE COURSES

1. Near the top of the screen, click on the **Next** link.
   - The Instructional Design Tips for Online Courses screen appears.

2. Click on the [https://laulima.hawaii.edu/access/content/group/1d886acc-07fb-4dff-8014-fdb9ac7e9112/HTML/Access1.html](https://laulima.hawaii.edu/access/content/group/1d886acc-07fb-4dff-8014-fdb9ac7e9112/HTML/Access1.html) link.
   - A new browser window appears entitled Examples of Bad Design & Accessibility Issues.

3. Review the examples of bad design and accessibility issues.

4. Close the new browser window.
   - The Instructional Design Tips for Online Courses screen reappears.

EXERCISE 4 – REVIEW THE DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

1. Near the top of the screen, click on the **Next** link.
   - The Design and Accessibility Checklist screen appears.

2. Review the checklist.
   - See Attachment on page 7 of this module guide for the Design and Accessibility Checklist.

3. When finished, in the top right-hand corner of the browser window, click on the **Logout** link.

4. Close the browser window

PREPARING TO DESIGN YOUR COURSE

Prior to working in Laulima you need to do some planning. That means thinking about the design and content of your course. Here are some questions to help you begin this process:

- Using what you’ve learned so far, can you think of ways to bring your current traditional classroom techniques into the online environment? How?
- How will you be organizing your course, i.e., by chapter, week, other?
- Do you have digital copies of your content or will it need to be created?
- What tools would you most likely use?
- How can Laulima help you to increase student retention and success?
- Are there any components in your course that you feel cannot be put online? If so, what are they?
- How would you solve that problem?
- What new features do you hope to incorporate into your teaching with Laulima?

See Attachment 2 on page 9 of this module guide for a Course Design Process Table for more questions.
Now that you have some ideas, you need to capture them on paper. Yes, paper! In the long run, this step will save you significant time, effort, and frustration. The best way to capture your ideas is to use storyboarding or, at the least, some blank pieces of paper. Storyboarding is the act of laying out all of your course’s components and knowing where everything is going to be placed, what content you’ll need and where it’s coming from, etc. The storyboarded information will covered and used in the module guide entitled, “Working with Content.”

Conclusion of Workshop’s Activities

- Questions and answers or clarifications about workshop content
- Have your expectations been met?
- Completion of a workshop evaluation

The module is complete

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- For assistance, call me at 933-3226, send email to cynthiae@hawaii.edu, or come by the Instructional Technology Lab in UCB 120. Lab hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00 (usually closed from noon to 1:00).
- Laulima @ UHH Community Weblog – This blog is intended to provide up-to-date information. http://weblog.uhh.hawaii.edu/weblog/laulima/
## Design and Accessibility Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Element</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Okay</th>
<th>Fix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using appropriate font sizes?</td>
<td>Font that is too small can not be ready by those with poor eyesight. A font type size of 12 point or greater is recommended.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using appropriate font styles?</td>
<td>Excessive use of the bold and italic font styles can inhibit readability.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using appropriate font colors, or is key information identified by color only?</td>
<td>The colors red and green are indistinguishable by those who are color blind. Use only after the the meaning of an object or text has also been communicated another way.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there enough contrast between text and background color/graphics?</td>
<td>Text can be &quot;lost&quot; when placed on top of an similiar background color, or when on top of a graphic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using blinking text?</td>
<td>Individuals with photosensitive epilepsy can have a seizure triggered by displays that flicker or flash.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Layout:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are some of your elements clustered too closely together?</td>
<td>Individuals with motor skill difficulties can have difficulties if clicking elements require precision. Also, make sure the elements, such as graphical links are sufficiently large.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using appropriate font styles?</td>
<td>Will your users have to scroll too far down or across?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Navigation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your graphic links labeled appropriately?</td>
<td>If two or more links refer to different targets but share the same link text this can be frustrating for your user. Use distinctive labels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your links active?</td>
<td>Test all links to make sure they work, and that they go to the correct location(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your links descriptive enough?</td>
<td>Avoid creating links that say &quot;Click Here.&quot; Text used as a link should clearly identify the target of the link, such as the name of a file or webpage to which it goes. Also, screen readers can open up a list of all the links contained on the page for individuals who are blind. This would not be helpful if all links were labeled &quot;Click Here.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there too many text links on a page?</td>
<td>This can be distracting and can cause frustration for users who have learning disabilities. Create links to the most important elements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Element</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Okay</td>
<td>Fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Images:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your images inappropriately tagged?</td>
<td>All images should contain ALT (Alternative) text with a clear and concise description for individuals with visual difficulties who are using screen readers. This information is also useful for individuals who have turned off image downloads due to low bandwidth connections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your ALT text not descriptive enough of the image?</td>
<td>ALT text should convey what is important or relevant about the image in question.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using any animated images that blink or flicker?</td>
<td>Individuals with photosensitive epilepsy can have a seizure triggered by displays that flicker or flash.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your Data Tables missing HTML header tags?</td>
<td>The use of headers in a table helps organize the information read by screen readers. It can keep a column or row heading together with its data in the table. Also, screen readers change their inflection when voicing a header to distinguish it from content.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you providing minimal or no description for your data tables?</td>
<td>It is helpful to have a caption and summary for your data tables; a caption is a like a title that is shown on the screen while the summary gives a broader description of the table’s purpose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you using Tables for Layout purposes?</td>
<td>Layout tables can cause problems for individuals using screen readers. It’s better to use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to create columns and to control spacing. If not, design your page in a linear fashion as screen readers read from left to right, cell-by-cell, row-by-row. However, don’t use table headers and captions for layout table as these are for data tables only.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you nesting tables within tables?</td>
<td>It’s better to use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). However, if that is impractical, try to keep it as simple as possible with no more than three levels of nesting should be used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still not sure if your webpages are ADA compliant? Use one of the validation tools listed below:

W3C Markup Validation Service - [http://validator.w3.org/](http://validator.w3.org/)
Web 3.0 Accessibility Tool - [http://www.wave.webaim.org/index.jsp](http://www.wave.webaim.org/index.jsp)