



How to Meet Students' Accessibility Needs: VSU Access Office & IT/Distance Learning Working Together

Building accessible online and hybrid courses using VISTA and Wimba Tools

37 th Annual Computing Conference - USG - Rock Eagle - October 24, 2008



Accessibility in Online Courses

Building accessible online and hybrid courses using VISTA and Wimba Tools

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Presenters

At Rock Eagle

- Beatriz Potter
- Jonathan Sizemore
- Eric Jackson

Presenting through Wimba Classroom

- Jessica Klotz

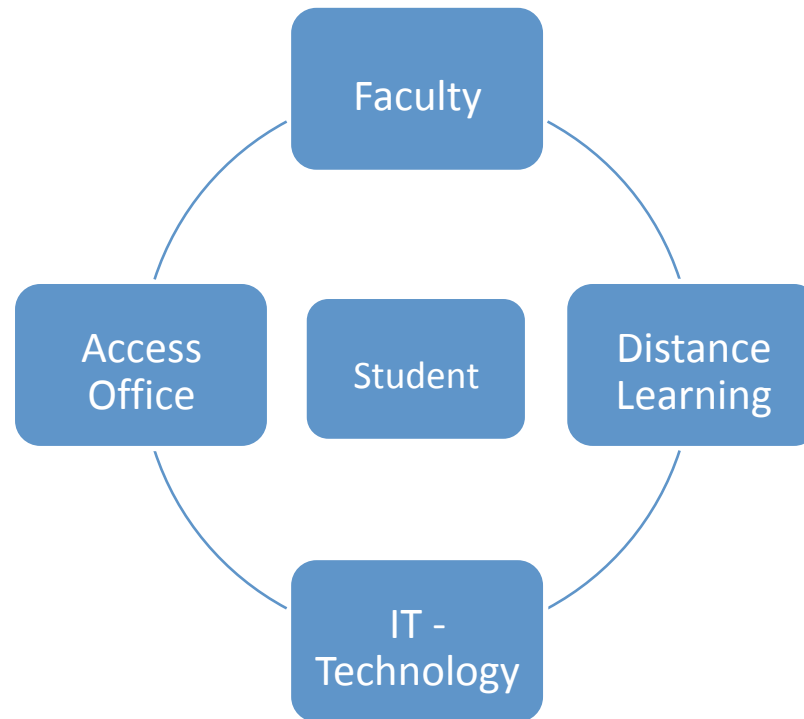


How we got the idea?

- Collaboration among, Distance Learning, Access Office and Information Technology
- An internship opportunity created a possibility for a liaison with the Access Office
- Distance learning supports the Online Sign Languages classes. They use IP video conferencing and Wimba. Some ideas came from that experience.
- Bringing resources together to support students
- Presentations provided opportunities to see new applications of Wimba Tools.



Providing Accessibility at VSU





Agenda

- Purpose
- Define Universal Design
- Provide information about the accommodations that students may need
- How the tools available can be used to implement Universal Design



The Purpose of this training is:

- To inform faculty and staff about the possibilities available through the use of VISTA and Wimba Tools to make online classes accessible to all students regardless of disability or learning style.



What is Disability?

- “The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered (U.S. Department of Justice, ¶2).”



Universal Design

“The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

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The Center for Universal Design*

Tips for Universal Design

- Keep it Simple
- As pretty and fun as text effects and multicolored backgrounds are they can be distracting and can interfere with adaptive technology your student may be using.
- Provide information in multiple formats, this way everyone gets the message.





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Online Accommodations

- Recorded Lectures
- Closed Captioning
- Interpreting Services
- Auditory Information
- HTML Format
- Assessments



Accommodations- Record Lectures

- One example of an accommodation that is given to students with disabilities is the ability to tape record lectures.
- English as a second language
- The archive feature in the Live Classroom

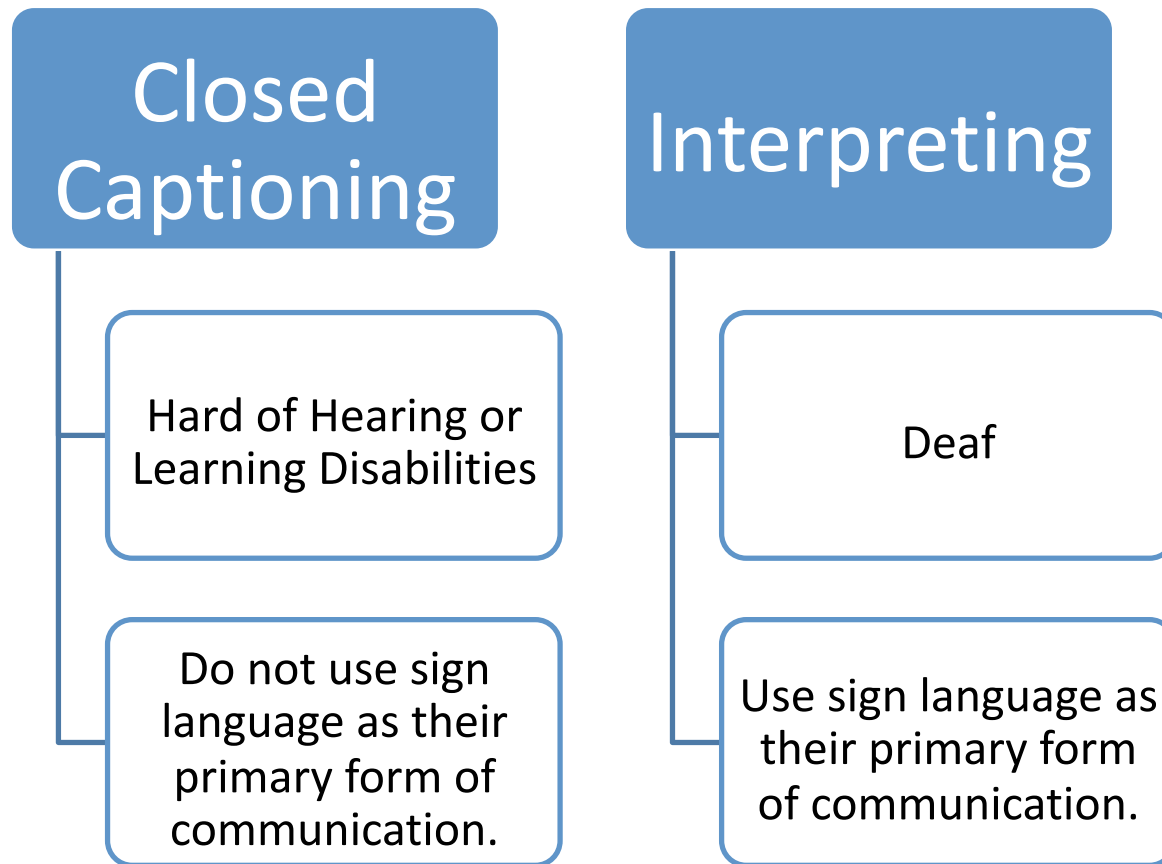


Accommodations - Auditory Information

- All auditory information should be in text.
 - Wimba Voice tools allow this type of accommodation.



Closed Captioning and Interpreting Services





Closed Captioning and Interpreting Services continued

- We have suggested that instructors add interpreters and closed captioners to their Vista courses, to allow access to prep material.
 - Archives can be used for prep material with Wimba closed captioning



Accommodations - Vista

- The majority of Vista is compatible with screen reading software for students with Visual and Learning Disabilities.
 - Please convert word documents to HTML format.
 - Can be done with Wimba Create.



Vista continued

- Wimba Voice Tools can be used to make your emails and other information more accessible to students with some vision.
- The discussion sections and Vista email will require assistance for students using JAWS.



Accommodations - Visual Disabilities

- Make sure information has high contrast
 - Black, text on white backgrounds are best
 - Red text on white backgrounds is often very difficult to see.
- Large Print is better
 - If the font is too small consider splitting the information between two slides or pages to give space for larger font

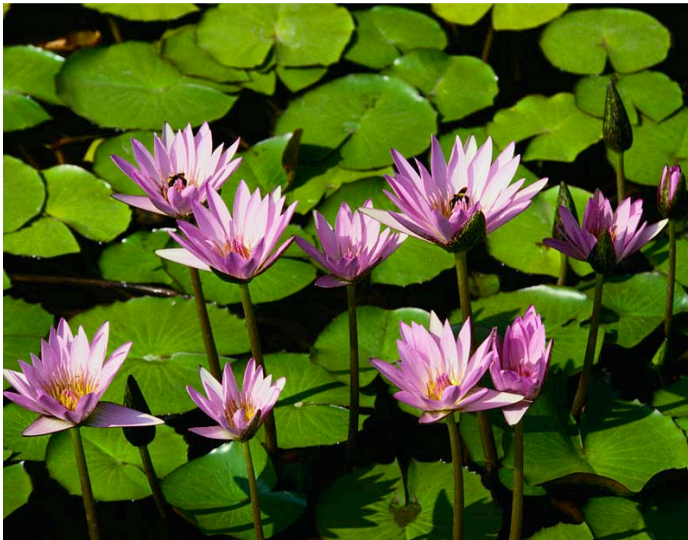
Contrast

- High contrast is necessary for visual accessibility



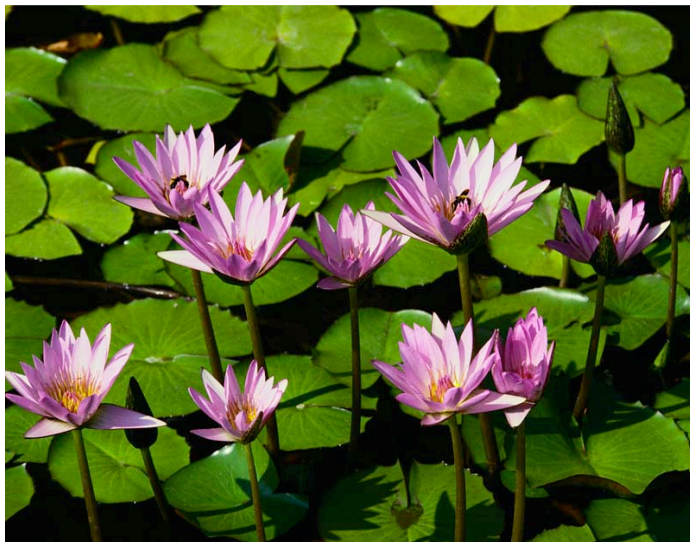
Pictures Should Have a Detailed Caption.

**Lily pads with pink blooms on Walden pond. Being
pollinated by Honey Bees.**



Pictures Should Have a Detailed Caption.

Lily pads with pink blooms on Walden pond. Being
pollinated by Honey Bees.



Stereogram of an Hourglass





Screen Readers

- Screen Readers are software programs which read text to people who have Visual Disabilities or Learning Disabilities.
 - JAWS
 - Universal Reader



Screen Readers and Wimba

- The form of Java that Wimba uses is not compatible with JAWS at this time.
 - Voice Tools are not accessible to students who are blind.
- Depending on the level of vision, a student who needs this software may only be able to listen to the audio portion of the Live Classroom and respond using the Talk option.



Accommodations - Assessments

- The Assessments tools in Vista are more accessible than those available in Wimba Create.
- Allow extended time on assessments by:
 - List quizzes as separate Versions so instructors can identify which quiz they are uploading for this accommodation.
 - Use selective release to make the assessment available to a particular student.



Best Practices

- Convert Word documents into HTML before posting them to Vista
- Always archive classes
- Make sure pictures and graphs have alternate text and detailed captions
- Use graphs that are clear and concise
- Make sure information is provided in multiple formats



Best Practices continued

- Advise students through Banner if a course will incorporate specific technology like Wimba Tools
- Utilize email and private chat features to maintain disability confidentiality in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Contact your college or university's disability service provider to find out how you can collaborate to provide accessibility in your institution.



Future

- Train Faculty and Student Support Center
- Have an awareness campaign
- Create templates to share basic accessibility design for courses to help faculty that is new and has student requesting specific accommodation.



Future

- Focus Groups to find more detailed user experience with Vista and Wimba Tools
- Explore possibilities for teaching and learning foreign languages



Conclusion

- Vista and Wimba Tools can be used in conjunction to implement Universal Design in online and hybrid courses. Implementation of Universal design will lead to greater accessibility for all students.



Thank you to:

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Thank you

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