



Symposium on Educational Excellence 2024

Accessibility implementation at five years: a School of Nursing impact survey

Echeles, M.A., Teaching and Learning Center, OHSU;

Asma Taha, PhD, CPNP-PC/AC, Professor, School of Nursing

Keywords

Accessibility, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Inclusion, Diversity

Abstract

For over five years, OHSU School of Nursing (SON) has invested in accessibility training, resources, and professional development especially tailored for faculty, aimed at creating universally-designed online, hybrid, and technology-enhanced courses. The primary objective is to enhance access and meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities. This quality improvement study seeks to explore the successes, barriers, and potential impact of accessibility training, thereby addressing the overarching question of the initiative's effectiveness.

Methods

A quantitative survey approach supplemented with open-ended questions for qualitative analysis will be employed. The survey questions are adapted from Guilbaud's 2021 study on faculty perceptions of accessibility in online learning, ensuring alignment with the context of a health science university. The Qualtrics survey will be distributed via email to SON faculty across five campuses: Ashland, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Monmouth, and Portland. The survey aims to assess faculty knowledge of creating accessible online courses, familiarity with OHSU resources on digital accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and perceptions regarding the benefits, challenges, and impact of accessible and inclusive course design.

Implication

This study is designed to delve into the effectiveness of accessibility and UDL training, resources, and professional development on SON faculty, ultimately influencing student inclusion, learning, and success. The survey's findings are anticipated to uncover knowledge, skills, and application of digitally accessible, universally-designed courses. The broader implication of this research pertains to the improvement of accessibility resources, their wider dissemination, and the enhancement of faculty knowledge concerning available resources. This, in turn, encourages all SON and OHSU faculty to design courses that are accessible and inclusive, promoting the success of all learners including those with disabilities.

Impact/Effectiveness

While the survey results are yet to be obtained, the study anticipates contributing valuable insights into the effectiveness of accessibility and UDL initiatives. The impact is not only on faculty knowledge and practices but extends to student inclusion, learning experiences, and overall success. The potential implications include the enhancement of accessibility resources, their wider distribution, and the fostering of a culture where faculty proactively design courses with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are inherent in the study's focus on designing digitally accessible courses and applying UDL principles. Accessibility in education ensures equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities, aligning with the principles of diversity and inclusion. UDL, as a broader framework, promotes inclusive curriculum design for diverse learners, both online and in traditional learning environments. Therefore, the study inherently contributes to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the educational landscape.

Possible Applications

The survey results and study findings are directly applicable to improving resources, disseminating information about available resources to a wider audience, and encouraging faculty across SON and OHSU to design courses that prioritize accessibility and inclusivity. The study's outcomes aim to create a positive impact on the overall learning experiences of all students, fostering an inclusive educational environment that accommodates diverse learning needs, including those of students with disabilities.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the importance of digital accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in online, hybrid, and technology-enhanced course design.
2. Discuss the impact of accessibility training on School of Nursing course design.
3. Apply principles of accessibility and UDL to future course design, teaching, and learning.
4. Recommend future training, resources, and support for inclusive course design and learning environments.

References

Guilbaud, T.C., Martin, F., & Newton, X. (2021). Faculty perception on accessibility in online learning: Knowledge, practice and professional development. *Online Learning*, 25(2), 6-35. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v25i2.2233>

Lowenthal, P.R., Lomellini, A. Accessible Online Learning: A Preliminary Investigation of Educational Technologists' and Faculty Members' Knowledge and Skills. *TechTrends* 67, 384–392 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-022-00790-1>