Best Practices for Accessible Workshops and Presentations

This checklist developed by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, serves as a guide to ensure your workshops and presentations are accessible and equitable for all participants.

Registration

☐ Include a question on the registration form that enables participants to disclose a disability and/or request accommodations, such as an ASL interpreter for in-person events, or live captioning for Zoom presentations.

☐ Include an open-ended question on the registration form that allows participants to share concerns and/or ask questions before attending.

For all workshops and presentations

☐ Send email reminders a week before the start date: Make your Outlook email accessible.

☐ Make sure presentation materials, including graphics, images, and/or examples reflect a diversity of social identities including race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc.

☐ Make sure cited research emphasizes the contributions of a diverse range of scholars. Be intentional about using research produced by individuals from historically marginalized groups.

☐ Ensure that all presentation materials use inclusive language and are fully accessible.

☐ During introductions consider sharing your pronouns as a model. If participants introduce themselves, make sharing pronouns optional. Be familiar with the CTLT’s resources on pronouns and why sharing pronouns should be optional: A More Inclusive Campus: Pronouns and Preferred Names.

☐ Describe your physical appearance. This is helpful for those who are blind/low vision or otherwise unable to see you and for modeling accessibility best practices.

☐ Consider beginning with a Land Acknowledgement to recognize Cal Poly sits on the traditional lands of the yak titʸu titʸu yak tithini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region. Seek to be mindful of when and how to use land acknowledgments.

☐ When presenting, read all text content on slides and describe images, charts, and diagrams. Avoid using words like "here" and “there” and instead describe what is being displayed. This ensures an equitable experience for those who are blind/low vision.

☐ Videos should display accurate captions that include capitalization and punctuation.

☐ Avoid using flashing lights/strobes which are triggers for those with photosensitive epilepsy.

☐ Provide reflection time for discussions and activities so participants can process, prepare, and participate fully. This supports the learning of all participants and may be particularly beneficial for those with cognitive disabilities and multilingual learners.

☐ Plan ahead for team activities: Consider intentional ways of forming groups that reduce homogeneity, being mindful of not singling out those who are underrepresented: CTLT Inclusive Teaching Tips.
In-person workshops and presentations

In addition to the section above, include the following:

☐ Be aware of accessibility in physical spaces: Make sure there is sufficient room for people to move through the space easily, including persons using wheelchairs. Space chairs so there is ample room for participants inclusive of body size and space needs.
☐ Invite participants at the start of the presentation/workshop to move about as needed and/or leave the space as needed.
☐ When possible, share a QR code for access to your slides before the presentation starts and provide physical copies for those who may need them.
☐ Use microphones in large spaces. Speak at a moderate pace and speak clearly.
☐ Face the audience while speaking so participants who are deaf/hard of hearing can read your lips.
☐ Repeat questions from the audience using the microphone. Give everyone a chance to speak with equitable time.
☐ If your presentation or workshop involves participants standing or raising hands, provide options for those who may not be able to stand or raise a hand, such as, “Please stand, wave, or otherwise gesture.”
☐ Decide whether you will allocate time at the end to take questions, or if you will answer questions during the presentation. Communicate this to the audience.

Zoom workshops and presentations

In addition to the second section above, include the following:

☐ Provide an introduction slide that displays Zoom features, such as where to locate audio and video, chat, reactions, and live transcript. Explain how/when to use these.
☐ Turn on the live transcript. Record when possible. Let participants know you are recording.
☐ When possible, share slides before the presentation starts. Make sure slides are fully accessible.
☐ Invite participants at the start of the presentation/workshop to come and go as needed and/or turn cameras off/on as needed.
☐ Decide whether you will allocate time at the end to take questions, or if you will answer questions during the presentation. Communicate this to participants ahead of time.
☐ Provide prompts for breakout rooms in advance, with time for reflection before entering breakout rooms.
☐ Allow sufficient time in breakout rooms for everyone to participate equitably.
☐ Check the chat periodically to address issues, comments, and questions.
☐ Consider displaying a timer during breaks.

Hybrid synchronous presentations

In addition to all three sections above, include the following:

☐ Repeat questions from the live audience for online participants.
☐ Plan ahead for discussions and activities to ensure equitable participation for both in-person and online participants.
☐ Check the chat periodically to address issues, comments, and questions. Read these aloud for the live audience.
Online asynchronous Canvas workshops

☐ Enroll participants before the first day of the workshop so they can prepare and plan ahead.
☐ Post a Syllabus that includes an Accessibility Statement and Diversity Statement.
☐ Invite participants to reach out to you privately to share their needs or concerns regarding access to course materials and/or participation in activities.
☐ Remind participants to enable Notifications to receive Canvas communications.
☐ Send weekly reminders via Announcements to help participants stay on track with due dates.
☐ Use the Canvas Accessibility Checker to ensure your Canvas content is fully accessible.
☐ Use the Ally Accessibility Report in Canvas to check all course materials for accessibility issues. Ally provides step-by-step tutorials for fixing inaccessible content.

Further Resources

- CTLT Accessibility Resources
- CTLT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Classroom
- CTLT Inclusive Teaching Tips
- Cal Poly Canvas Support
- Cal Poly Disability Resource Center
- Creating Accessible PowerPoint

For questions or comments about this document, please contact Pam Dougherty at padoughe@calpoly.edu or the CTLT at ctlt@calpoly.edu.