Accessibility Resources for Virtual Learning

Companion resources for the video entitled, *Virtual Supports for Struggling Learners*

Georgia Department of Education

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Accessibility Resources

Communication Tips

- Ensure effective communication. This is key! Checking in regularly with your special needs students is essential, whether it be via phone, email, text or synchronous session.

- Ensure all communication going out to students is clear, concise, all-encompassing, well thought out, and free of typos and errors.

- Encourage students to reach out for help. Establish a way for students to get timely and accurate answers to their questions so they are not held up for long periods of time while they are trying to work independently.

- Use personalized communication regularly. Group communication is appropriate is many instances, however, personalize your communication whenever possible. This is especially true when it applies to special needs students with differing situations or requirements.

- Provide timely feedback.

Auditory Resources

- Free text-to-speech options which may be great choices to read webpages, documents, and more.
- **Apple OS X Resources**
  - **Mac OS X Text to Speech** is the built-in text-to-speech accessibility feature in Mac OS X. You can simply highlight the text you want read and press a button once the feature is enabled. If you are a Mac user and want more information on text-to-speech, please visit the Mac OS X Accessibility site.
  - **Mac OS X Voiceover** is a screen reader built into the Mac operating system which provides auditory descriptions of onscreen elements.

- **Microsoft Windows & PC Resources**
  - **Microsoft Windows Narrator** is an accessibility feature built into your Microsoft Windows operating system to hear on screen text read aloud.
  - **Balabolka** can be downloaded to a PC to read a wide variety of text files. Another feature is that it can save the audio format for multiple viewings.
- **Additional Resources**
  - **Natural Reader** is a free online program that can be used to read course content, assignments, and assessments aloud. For an explanation on how to use this resource, visit our **NATURAL READER RESOURCE**.
  - **Announcify** can be downloaded for Android and Chrome users as an add-on. It reads out loud any website you want.

Dictation Resources

- Speech-to-text resources are available in your computer's operating system or in many applications you commonly use on your computer, including Microsoft Office applications. Dictation (speech-to-text) allows you to speak and your computer will convert your speech to text.
- The Vision Accessibility Page of the Apple website offers information on using Siri for speech-to-text functionality. To turn this function on, go to System Preferences under the Apple Menu, and click on Accessibility. You will then need to enable Siri.
- Windows 10 users can visit the Dictation page of the Windows Support page for information on how to utilize dictation features on their Windows computer.
- For information on using voice dictation with your Microsoft 0365 applications, visit the Dictate Your Documents on the Microsoft Accessibility page. This feature is currently only available to Microsoft 0365 subscribers.

Visual Resources

- **Enlarging Text on a Mac/iPad**
  - Visit the Apple Accessibility Page for resources to enlarge text on a Mac/iPad.

- **Adjusting Size and Color – Windows**
  - Visit the Make Windows Easier To See page for information on adjusting size and color text on a PC using Windows 1-.

- **American Federation for the Blind**
  - The American Federation for the Blind offers accessibility information for Windows users who are blind or low vision as well as accessibility information for Mac OS X users.

Computer Operating Accessibility Resources

- Apple OS X Accessibility Page**:**
  - https://www.apple.com/accessibility/
- Microsoft Windows Accessibility Page:
  - https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility/
- Google Chromebook Accessibility Page:
  - https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/177893?hl=en

COURSE CONTENT - Middle and High School Shared Course Content Resources offered by Georgia Virtual

- Georgia Virtual offers online course content for middle school content area courses for grades 6-8 and a large catalog of high school courses, including Advanced Placement, in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, CTAE/Electives, and Fine Arts. The Georgia Virtual content is aligned to Georgia standards and AP courses are approved by the College Board.
    - http://www.gavirtuallearning.org/resources/sharedlandingpage.aspx
- Georgia Virtual online course content is developed in a way which naturally provides some of the supports commonly identified in individualized plans, such as:
    - a flexible work schedule, allowing for students to take more time to complete work each day
    - opportunities for differentiated instruction based on a variety of learning styles
    - opportunity to preview course content
    - ability to work in a quiet environment with limited distractions
    - review activities, study guides, and notes are integrated into the course content
    - ability to use course content, resources, and self-checks as needed to complete and prepare for graded assignments and assessments

TEACHER TRAINING COURSE - Just in Time for Teachers: Digital Learning Days Microcourse

- A short, 1-2-hour training course offered by Georgia Virtual Professional Learning. This course will introduce digital learning basics and will assist in planning for digital learning days. Also includes a section on differentiating for and supporting varying student populations.
    - http://cms.gavirtualschool.org/ProfessionalDev/Digital-Learning-Days/content/index.html#/

TEACHER TRAINING COURSE - Special Needs Course 1

- Special Needs 1 course, offered by Georgia Virtual Professional Learning, is specific to supporting special needs populations in the online environment. This course will be coming soon, and it covers the following topics:
    - Special Needs Student Populations
    - Best Practices and Strategies to Support Special Needs Students
    - Accommodations through the Learning Management System and Online
    - Teacher Implemented Accommodations
    - Individualized Plans and Best Practices
    - Using Online Data to Support Special Needs Students

https://gavirtualpd.catalog.instructure.com/