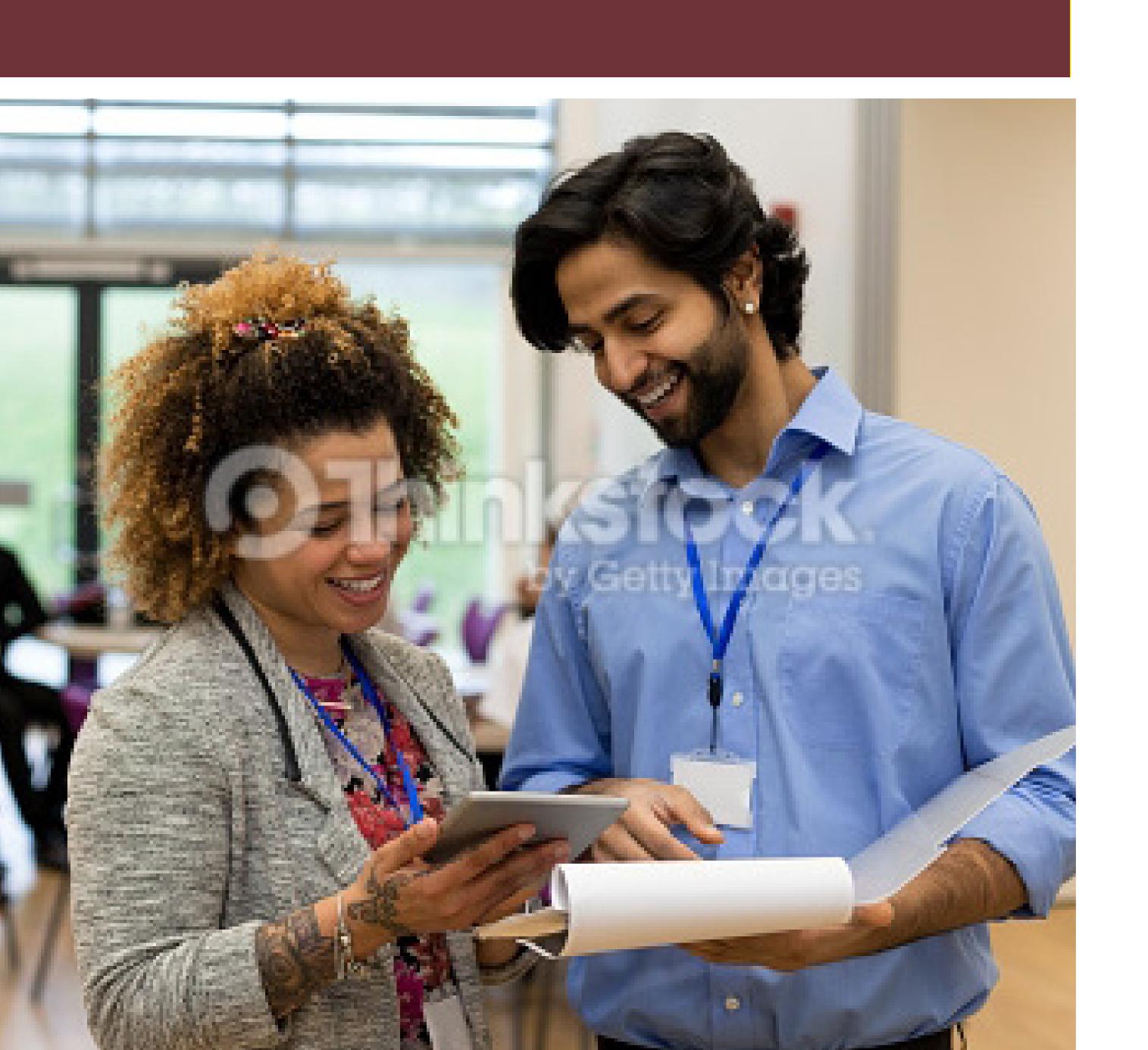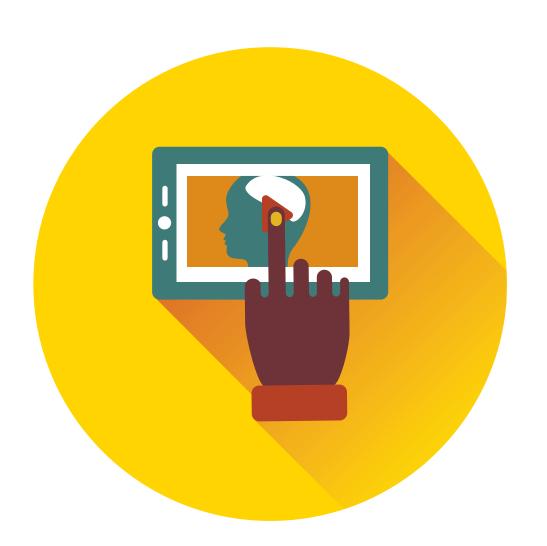# Online Learning Accessibility:

Empowering Teaching Through Universal Design Principles

Shawn Wright M.Ed. and Cari Murphy Ph.D.

November 2018

The Idaho Training Clearinghouse (ITC) has worked closely with the Center on Disabilities and Human Development and the Idaho State Department of Education to promote the training of course designers in understanding the importance and fairness of accessible universal design principles.

BACKGROUND

Three Steps in Three Years

Step 1
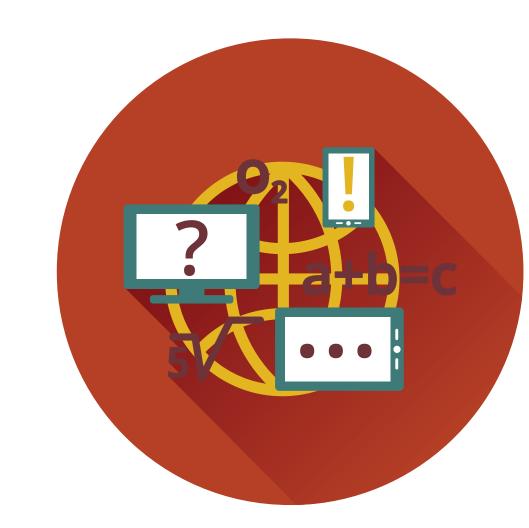Implemented an Accessible LMS in 2015 laying the foundation for adding accessible documents, media and quizzes.

Step 2
Implemented Accessible Document Creation courses for our course authors in 2017 introducing the concepts of designing accessible Word, PowerPoint and PDF files as well as captioning video.

Step 3
In 2018 we added Designing Accessible Courses through Universal design principles in a "train the trainer" model that emphasizes course design be developed with an understanding that people with disabilities have equal access to web content and functionality.
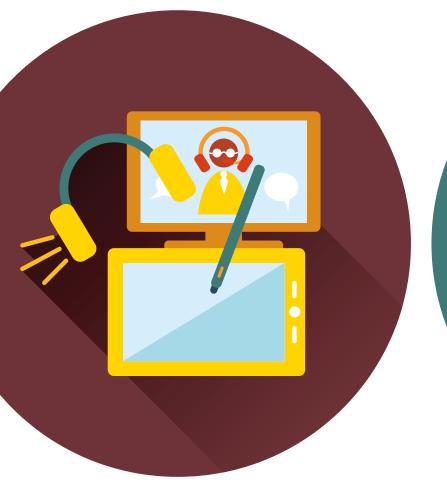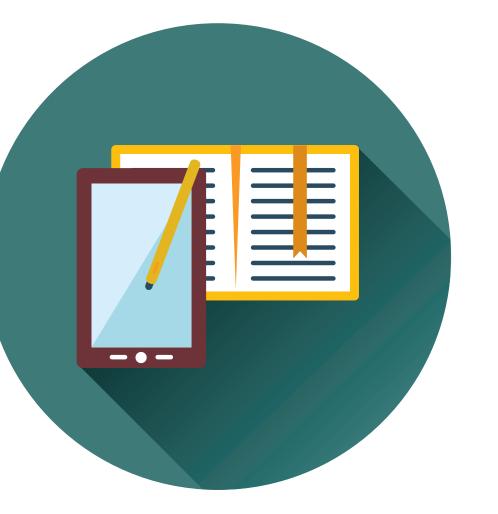
PROBLEM

ITC project staff were spending many hours remediating documents in order to promptly post resources to our website. We either needed more staff to match the workload, or we had to delay our quick turn-around time for posting documents. Our solution was to train document creators on accessibility – and the sooner the better!

Once the staff was trained in accessible document design the focus shifted to designing accessible courses.
By having an accessible Learning Management System in place we were able to:

- create well-structured web pages
- design simple, consistent navigation that is easily understood by screen readers
- offer closed captioning for video
- provide documents in accessible formats

SOLUTION

Using an in-house Learning Management System (LMS), the ITC constructed a series of short, concise and accessible mini-courses to provide learners the knowledge and skills to be proficient at creating accessible documents. In 2018, we added 2 new mini-courses in accessible course design, Introduction to Online Learning and Online Learning Accessibility.

The coursework was designed as accessible content and was tested by the ITC before launching.

Mini Courses currently offered through ITC for 2018-19 are:

- MS Office 2013 Accessibility Features
- Creating Accessible Documents in MS Office 2013
- Acrobat Pro XI Accessibility Features
- Creating an Accessible Syllabus using Adobe Acrobat Pro XI & Word 2013
- Creating Accessible Forms in Adobe Acrobat Pro XI & Word 2013
- Introduction to Online Learning
- Online Learning Accessibility

TOOLS

Content Management System

- Open source, easily manage users, easy to design and edit accessible page content

evoq POWERED BY DNN

Learning Management System (LMS)

- Plug-in module for Evoq
- Easily design accessible courses
- Tracking and reporting capabilities
- Embed files, videos, quizzes
- Supports most types of instructional content

Accord LMS Learning Management System

OpenSesame E-Learning Marketplace

- Plug-in courses for Accord LMS
- Courses designed with accessible considerations "out of the box"
- Courses easily "tracked" through LMS
- Interactive design – student watches demo and is encouraged to create an accessible document while following along

OpenSesame

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- ITC now receives far more accessible document submissions from our constituents, reducing staff time on remediation
- Trained over 35 participants in year 2 accessible document design
- Will train up to 10 more staff in accessible document design year 3
- Goal is to train up to 10 accessible course design trainers
- State goal is to provide resources and training to district/LEA level in fiscal 2019

University of Idaho
College of Education, Health and Human Sciences

IDAHO TRAINING Clearinghouse

CENTER ON DISABILITIES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
live learn work play