



# ACCESS NEWS

## **Accessibility Challenge: Creating OCR PDFs in Acrobat**

SBCTC's online module on [how to create screen-reader friendly PDFs](#) is a great resource for learning how to remediate scanned PDF materials into accessible real text within Adobe Acrobat, supplemented by video demos and additional links on how to utilize OCR (Optical Character Recognition). Many of our students with disabilities rely on remediation to create accessible and alternative formats of their course materials. To try remediation through OCR, come into the Learning Resource Center to check it out, and try SBCTC's wide range list of [accessibility mini modules](#)!

## **UDL Course: Introduction to Designing for Accessibility**

The Center for Applied Special Technology's [Introduction to Designing for Accessibility](#), and open-enrollment online course, is a self-paced learning experience created to equip educators with the knowledge and tools needed to evaluate, create, and implement accessible instructional materials. The course offers a flexible and engaging exploration of accessibility practices and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles as they apply to digital content. Participants develop practical skills for reviewing, designing, and delivering materials that support the diverse needs of all learners, including students with disabilities. By deepening their understanding of accessibility, educators learn how to reduce barriers to learning, increase student engagement, and meet legal accessibility requirements with confidence.

### **Benefits for learners**

UDL recognizes that learners differ in how they engage with content, process information, and demonstrate understanding. By providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression, UDL supports diverse learning preferences, cultural backgrounds, language abilities, and cognitive styles. This flexibility helps reduce barriers, increases access to learning, and promotes independence, confidence, and persistence. Learners with disabilities benefit from built-in supports, while all learners gain options that make learning more meaningful and manageable.




### **Benefits for educators**

For educators, UDL encourages intentional, proactive design rather than reactive accommodations. This reduces the need for individual retrofits and last-minute fixes while improving instructional clarity and consistency. UDL-aligned materials are often easier to adapt, reuse, and update, saving time over the long term. Educators also gain better insight into student needs through varied ways of assessment and expression, leading to more accurate evaluations of learning.

UDL helps create more equitable learning environments by normalizing flexibility and choice. When options are available to everyone, learners with disabilities are not singled out, reducing stigma and promoting a sense of belonging. UDL also supports multilingual learners, first-generation students, and those facing temporary or situational barriers, such as limited technology access or high stress.

## ***Inclusive Classrooms: UDL in Action***

Clover Park Technical College's Teaching and Learning Center also offers a course called [Inclusive Classrooms: UDL in Action](#). This course is an online self-paced course that provides 48 hours of professional development hours for faculty. It is currently facilitated by Geoff Cain and you can contact him for more information at [geoffrey.cain@cptc.edu](mailto:geoffrey.cain@cptc.edu).

Affective Networks The Why of Learning	Recognition Networks The What of Learning	Strategic Networks The How of Learning
		
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Representation</b>	<b>Action and Expression</b>
<b>Learners are engaged and motivated to learn with:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interest and purpose</li><li>• Voice and choice</li><li>• Become independent and self-directed</li></ul>	<b>Accessing content and processing information involves:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of multiple media and formats</li><li>• Prior knowledge</li></ul>	<b>Planning and organizing tasks and demonstrating:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Options for creating projects, reports, etc.</li><li>• Monitoring and tracking progress</li></ul>

## **Accessibility in Math Materials**

Those experienced in creating accessible materials are typically very familiar with the importance of alternative text and long descriptions for images. These practices ensure that visual content—such as photographs, charts, or illustrations—can be meaningfully interpreted by users who rely on screen readers or other assistive technologies. However, when it comes to accessibility, mathematical content is often overlooked. Mathematical equations, graphs, and formulas present a unique challenge because they rely heavily on visual structure, spatial relationships, and symbolic notation that cannot be adequately conveyed through standard plain text alone.

This is where tools like [Math Detective](#) play a critical role. Math Detective is an AI-based accessibility solution designed specifically to convert STEM materials into formats that are usable by a wider range of learners. It is capable of processing both images of graphs and equations as well as text-based mathematical expressions, including complex structures such as fractions, exponents, and multi-step formulas. By interpreting these elements accurately, Math Detective helps bridge a long-standing accessibility gap in mathematics and other technical disciplines.

One of Math Detective's key outputs is MathML, a markup language designed to represent mathematical notation in a machine-readable format. MathML allows users to insert precise mathematical content directly into digital documents, supporting consistency and reusability in academic and professional work. However, MathML has practical limitations. Because it must exist within specialized environments such as XML or HTML documents and is not yet fully supported by all screen readers, it can be difficult and time-consuming to implement effectively.

To address these challenges, Math Detective also produces Spoken Text, an alternative that achieves nearly the same communicative goal as MathML with far less effort. Spoken Text translates mathematical expressions into clear, descriptive plain language that mirrors how the MathML would be read aloud. This makes it significantly more informative than a standard plain text equation, while remaining far more approachable than markup-based solutions. By avoiding compatibility issues and reducing technical overhead, Spoken Text offers a practical, inclusive way to make mathematical content accessible—ensuring that equations are not just visible, but truly understandable to all users.

# About the Accessibility Committee

The Clover Park Community College Accessibility Committee, in support of college and state policies, will establish, review, and evaluate college wide accessibility plans and advise the Student Learning Council in regard to promoting and providing appropriate, effective, and integrated access for students, employees and community members. To that end, the committee will:

- model and facilitate a culture of accessibility for all faculty, staff and students;
- provide training and support to improve the level of accessibility;
- serve as a clearinghouse for accessibility questions, resources, and issues for CPTC.

## Meetings

We are currently meeting once a month on the first Monday of the month at 2:00 PM in Zoom.

## Disability Resources

- [General disability resources](#)
- [Disability resources for students](#)
- [Disability resources for faculty](#)

## Accessibility Committee Membership

### *Co-Chairs*

- Geoff Cain -Teaching & Learning Center
- Pamela Jeter -Information Technology
- Sarah Addington - Disability Resource Services

## Members

- Jenn Adrien - Marketing & Communications
- Rachael Butler - Workforce Development
- Stefanie Bosen - Finance & Administration
- Jessica Cary - Faculty
- LiLi Cutler - Learning Resource Center
- Pearl DeSure - Library
- Brady Hageman - eLearning
- Rebekah Heaton - Faculty
- Jennifer Aikens Howard - Operations
- Pam Munizza - Faculty
- Charity Rominger - Faculty
- Harman Sidhu - Marketing & Web Services
- Sheli Sledge - Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Eric Stokes - Faculty
- Julie Watts - Faculty
- Leah Wilkins - Workforce Development
- Shayne Wong - Human Resources