Accessibility

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Description
Accessibility or 508 compliance is the ability to access information found in a document, website, or video regardless of an individual’s disability status. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies and organizations receiving federal funding to make accessible all websites, documents and videos developed by the agency or organization. Minnesota has similar laws relevant to state agencies. Although not required, many businesses follow 508 accessibility guidelines as a best practice.

Accessibility also refers to the accessibility of buildings and facilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Title II of ADA requires all state and local governments to have accessible buildings. State and local building codes also require businesses to have accessible facilities in new or renovated properties, particularly health care facilities. In these activities, student will learn how to make accessible documents and develop a building accessibility plan.

Competencies

C1. Health Equity and Cultural Competency in Health and Oral Healthcare

- 1.2. Diversity, Culture and Linguistic Knowledge
  - Recognize common mental illnesses and disabilities.
  - Describe best practices in verbal and written communications with and providing oral health care services to young children, adolescents, older adults, and people with mental illness and other disabilities.

C2. Effective Communication and Health Literacy

- 2.4. Accessibility (508-compliance)
  - Define accessibility (508-compliance).
  - Understand the importance of accessibility, including relevant laws.
  - Name types of disabilities, assistive technologies, and how they are affected by accessibility.
  - Recall types of communication materials that are applicable to accessibility laws.
  - Explain basic strategies and resources for creating accessible communication materials.
  - Create accessible documents using Microsoft Office products.
Learning Outcomes

1. Describe accessibility (508-compliance) and relevant laws.
2. Name types of disabilities and assistive technologies affected by the accessibility of documents, websites and videos.
3. List types of communication materials that are applicable to accessibility laws.
4. Explain strategies and resources for creating accessible communication materials.
5. Create an accessible document using Microsoft Office products.
6. Develop a building Accessibility Plan.

Activities

Instructor provides a brief didactic lecture on accessibility. This should include:

- Definition of accessibility (508 compliance)
- Legal requirements or considerations
- Statistics on people with disabilities using U.S. Census data
- An explanation of the types of disabilities (visual, auditory, motor, seizures) that can affect access
- Types of documents that need to be accessible
- Assistive devices
- Strategies for making documents, websites and audiovisual media accessible
- Building accessibility considerations

Activity 1 – Screen Reader Demonstration

An accessibility specialist provides a screen reader demonstration (e.g. JAWS). Students can see how a screen reader scans documents and websites and what issues arise.

Activity 2 – Accessible Documents

Students receive training on making Microsoft Office products accessible (i.e. Word, PowerPoint, and Excel). Student creates an original document using a Microsoft Office product, runs the accessibility checker for errors, and makes corrections as needed.

In another version of this activity, the Instructor develops a Word document with accessibility issues and students correct the errors.

Activity 3 – Develop an Accessibility Plan

Students work in groups to learn relevant state and local accessibility guidelines for buildings. In groups, students will write a model Accessibility Plan for a clinic. The Plan should include considerations for the parking lot, building entrance/exists, waiting room seating and operatory. The Plan should also address accessible forms, service animals and interpretation services.
ACCESSIBILITY

Student Assessment

- Short answer quiz on definitions, laws and strategies.
- Accessibility check on document created.
- Ability of student to correct accessibility errors in a document.
- Assess effort put into development of a building Accessibility Plan.

Resources

Videos

- State of Texas. Instructional Videos on Accessibility, Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU_JX2xD7s1iV5QcCqCLIQA

Websites

- Caldwell B; Cooper M; Reid LG; Vanderheiden G. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0., Retrieved from http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/
- National Center on Disability and Access to Education. Cheatsheets, Retrieved from http://www.ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/
Suggested Placement within Curriculum

Accessibility or 508 compliance content should be addressed in both preclinical and clinical theory/didactic instruction with practical application throughout the students’ clinical education. Creating awareness and placing value on this content in a consistent manner with patient care experiences will reinforce applicability and best practices.