



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN GUIDE



**FULL SAIL**  
UNIVERSITY



# Table of Contents

**PAGE 3:**  
Introduction

**PAGE 5:**  
Principles of Universal Design for Learning

**PAGE 6:**  
How Common are Disabilities?

**PAGE 7:**  
What Barriers Do Students Face?

**PAGE 8:**  
Communication Strategies

**PAGE 9:**  
Best Practices for Communication

**PAGE 11:**  
Best Practices for Physical Awareness

**PAGE 12:**  
Best Practices for Classrooms

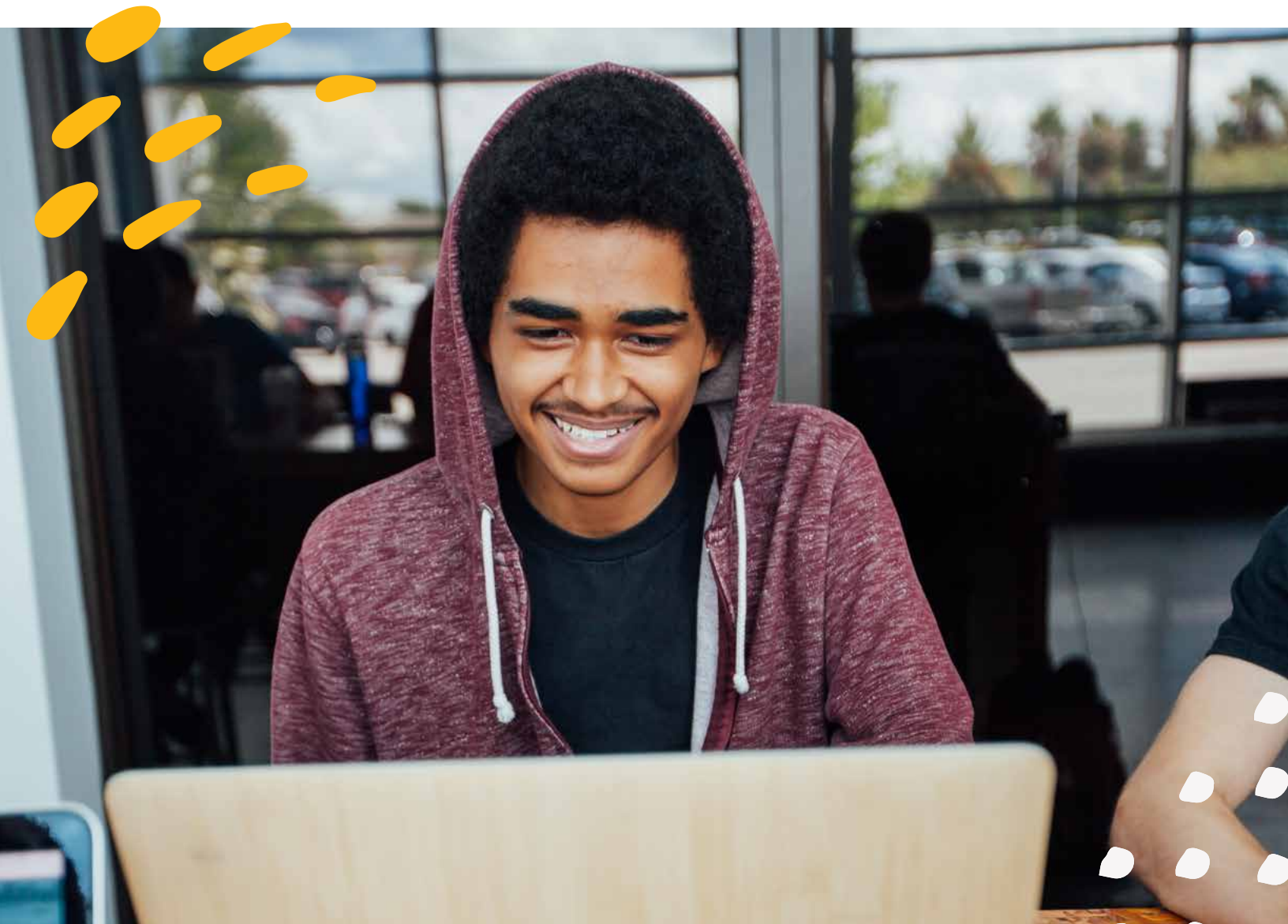
**PAGE 17:**  
Best Practices for Zoom

**PAGE 20:**  
Best Practices for Documents

**PAGE 23:**  
Audio, Video, and Image Content: Best Practices

# Introduction

Welcome to the Universal Design Guide! This guide has been created by Full Sail University's Universal Design Committee to provide you with tips and resources for optimizing and creating learning environments that are accessible, usable, and convenient for all learners, regardless of age, ability, or other factors. When we create and foster environments that work for everyone, all of our students thrive.



## Equality



## Equity



© 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.  
May be reproduced with attribution.

**Universal Design** is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their background or ability. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** provides opportunities for all learners to access, participate in, and progress through curricula by reducing or removing barriers found in instruction. Barriers can include the ways that information is presented or accessed that cause difficulty for some students to fully engage with the curricula. Universal Design concepts focus on creating equity for all learners rather than just equality. Like the bike in the first illustration above, one size doesn't fit all. Education works in the same way. Learners don't all access education or learn in the same way. Universal Design for Learning Principles help us recognize the multiple ways for teaching and learning so that all students have equitable opportunities to learn.

# Principles of Universal Design for Learning

You don't need to be an instructional designer to create learning material that is accessible and engaging for all learners. The following three principles will help educators create goals that promote high expectations for all learners, use flexible methods and materials, and accurately assess student progress.

- **Deliver instructional content in multiple formats to give students various ways of acquiring, processing, and integrating information and knowledge.**

For example, a lecture video can be accompanied by a slide deck in Keynote or PowerPoint for learners who are more visually motivated.

- **Provide students with options for navigating and demonstrating learning through multiple means of action and expression.**

Provide different options for assignments, such as allowing work to be completed as an essay, presentation, video, or podcast.

- **Provide multiple means of engagement to tap individual learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.**

Allow students to engage through multiple means, for example, through group work, individual assignments, written and verbal presentations, and physical or virtual presentations.



# How Common are Disabilities?

Over one billion people—about 15 percent of the world’s population—have some form of disability. Within the United States, 19 percent of postsecondary students identify as disabled, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in four Americans lives with a disability. These figures emphasize the regularity of disability within our communities. We all know someone who currently has a disability, has experienced a disability, or will experience a disability within their lifetime.

Disabilities may include:

- Mobility difficulties, including inability to walk
- Deafness and hearing loss
- Blindness and visual impairments
- Speech disabilities
- Cognitive disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Hidden disabilities



*One in four*  
AMERICANS LIVES  
WITH A DISABILITY



*About 15%*  
OF THE  
WORLD'S POPULATION  
HAS SOME FORM  
OF DISABILITY



# What Barriers Do Students Face?



Based on their unique circumstances, students may face barriers to education within a curriculum's instructional design, assignments, activities, or services offered. Students' unique characteristics extend beyond disabilities and may also include variables such as second language acquisition, socioeconomic differences, and other intersecting identities including race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and age, among others. It is our responsibility to consider all learners within the "universe" of our education as we build courses, activities, and programs.

Using UDL best practices, we can make informed choices about our instruction, assignments, and services so that all learners can benefit from Full Sail's unique education model, regardless of ability. We hope you will use this guide as a resource for considering the barriers your students might be encountering and creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment. For additional information and support, please contact the [Student Success Services](#) department at [success@fullsail.com](mailto:success@fullsail.com).

*Note: As a reminder, students who provide a notice from the Student Success Services department must receive the specified accommodation even if it is not included in this guide.*



# Communication Strategies

Language matters; it can empower our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in positive or negative ways. The language we use impacts those who read or hear our words, and our words demonstrate our knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity for others.



Some language used to describe persons with disabilities is outdated and may be **offensive**, such as “handicapped,” “crippled,” “crazy,” or “lame.” These terms should not be used within our educational environment. Less obvious problems exist with terms that focus on a person’s perceived “deficiency.” Phrases such as “wheelchair bound,” “afflicted with,” “suffering from,” “confined to,” or, conversely, “normal” or “regular”—which inadvertently suggest that someone else is abnormal or irregular—should also be avoided.

If we focus instead on the person first, our language will reflect our values of support and compassion. For example, referring to “the woman in a wheelchair” or “the fellow who is blind” is a minor linguistic trade-off for showing our person-first perspective. By being aware of the language we use and making small changes where appropriate, we can acknowledge and embrace our students with disabilities who may require academic adjustments to achieve their educational goals.



# Best Practices for Communication

While not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following communication best practices can help frame the way we speak to and about persons with disabilities in a way that fosters a community of mutual respect:

- Speak directly to the person, not to an aide or interpreter.
- Look directly at the person as you are speaking, and avoid talking from their side or back. This will help a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to read lips and better understand your message. It will also cue a person with visual impairment to know you are speaking to them.
- Speak clearly and distinctly at a moderate speed and volume. This assists with lip-reading and improves clarity for a person with a cognitive disability.
- Mention your name when speaking to a person with visual impairment to make it easier to distinguish speakers.



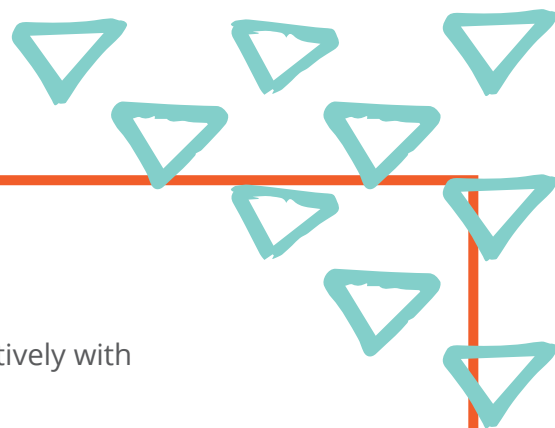


- Describe visual and physical references with some specificity. This benefits everyone, especially someone with a visual or cognitive disability. For example:

“This graph shows a steady rise of infection over time.”

“If I start ten feet in front of you and move to only five feet away, what happens to the volume of my voice?”

- Supplement in-person contact with online communication via email, Full Sail Online (FSO), or Full Sail One.
- Use straightforward language, avoiding unnecessary jargon and complexity. People with autism might take what you say literally, so it’s a good idea to avoid overly metaphorical language when discussing important information.
- Use students’ (preferred) names in electronic, written, and in-person communications.
- Don’t be afraid of language. We are human, and we all make mistakes from time to time when communicating with others. When you recognize a potential misstep, acknowledge your mistake, apologize, and correct it in the future.



## Resources

The following are helpful resources for communicating effectively with people with disabilities:

- [North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities: Communicating Effectively with People Who Have a Disability](#)
- [National League for Nursing: Communicating with People with Disabilities](#)
- [US Department of Labor: Communicating With and About People With Disabilities](#)
- [National Center on Disability and Journalism: Disability Language Style Guide](#)

# Best Practices for Physical Awareness

Be respectful of everyone's personal space. Physical awareness is especially important when communicating with persons with disabilities to avoid potential injuries. Consider the following tips:

- **Do not touch a blind or low-vision person** without first discreetly asking permission to give them physical guidance. For example, "May I help you locate the door?" If a person cannot see you coming, unexpected touch can cause alarm and even result in injury. If they decline your help, respect their choice.
- **For a person who uses a wheelchair**, also first discreetly ask permission before assisting them with their mobility. A person can be seriously injured if you push their chair without warning.
- **If a person has a hidden disability** such as PTSD, chronic pain, autism, or anxiety, unsolicited invasion of their personal space can trigger a negative, fearful, and sometimes dangerous reaction.




# Best Practices for Classrooms

The classroom is an essential element of the learning environment, whether it is a physical or online space. The physical design and culture of the classroom also contribute to students' engagement and feelings of inclusion. As educators, we have the ability to shape the classroom climate through adopting practices that respect diversity and inclusiveness. Inclusive instruction habits enhance your influence as a teacher while also creating a space where all students feel welcome and empowered to learn.

Both on the syllabus and in class, invite students to meet with you privately to discuss disability-related accommodations and other learning needs. Remember that this is an invitation, not a requirement. Where disability is concerned, leave it up to the student as to how much they wish to share with you, and focus your part of the conversation on what you can do to help your students succeed.



You can engage all learners by encouraging the sharing of multiple perspectives and demonstrating mutual respect. Make sure you are available to students—hold regular office hours, consider requiring one student-instructor meeting per term, and encourage students to ask questions and provide feedback. You can also add an “Inclusive Learning Statement” to your syllabus and introduce it on the first day of class. Feel free to use the following example:



“ Your success in this class is important to me. I acknowledge and respect that we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I encourage you to visit **Student Success Services** to determine how you can improve your learning as well. They can assist you with requesting reasonable accommodations, tutoring, and other opportunities for academic support.”



The following list provides additional recommendations for enhancing the accessibility and inclusiveness of your live or virtual classroom:

- Arrange instructional spaces to maximize inclusion and comfort. For physical classrooms, arrange seating to encourage participation, giving each student a clear line of sight to the instructor and visual aids while allowing room for wheelchairs, personal assistants, sign language interpreters, and assistive technology.
- Face the class when speaking, and enunciate clearly; use a microphone in larger classrooms.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any student by drawing undue attention to a difference (e.g., disability) or sharing private information (e.g., a specific student's need for an accommodation) unless the student brings up the topic in front of others. This is particularly important in order to avoid ADA violations.
- Minimize distractions for students with a range of attention abilities. For instance, you can put small groups in quiet work areas.
- When planning field trips or other alternate locations in your curriculum, consider the needs of all learners, and ensure that all needs can be met. This could mean creating an alternative option for students who might experience barriers to participation due to a disability.
- When making an announcements in class, post it online as well as via email.







- Provide textual references for visual drawings, charts, illustrations, and demonstrations.

**In the classroom**, this might mean describing the pattern of wave propagation and interference as you show it on-screen or explaining how a word cloud ranks words' frequency of use in a given context by font size.

**In the Learning Management System (LMS) or an electronic document**, this means employing appropriate "alt text" descriptions for charts, formulas, and illustrations.

- Embrace silence. Students process information at different rates. Try asking volunteers to restate your questions or to summarize the content just discussed. This provides faster processors with the opportunity to contribute while allowing slower processors to hear the information in a different, possibly more simplified way. You can also have students work in small groups to summarize the information just discussed within their group.



- When presenting slides, pace your lecture so that students with dyslexia and other perceptual or processing disabilities, as well as students with visual impairments who are reading along with your slides in braille or using voice-over to read aloud via earbuds, can follow along.

Take a breath or two as you change slides and between your sentences to let everyone arrive at the same point with you.

Read quotes or definitions aloud verbatim—your inflection will help clarify their meaning for all students. Read them twice if they're complicated.

Consider making slide decks available to all students. This helps all students focus on what you're saying during a lecture rather than furiously copying down the content on the slides.

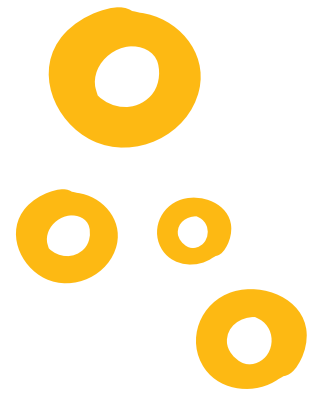
Try creating visual organizers from your slide decks by leaving out key terms; this encourages active listening and thoughtful processing of the information while students listen for the key terms to fill in to their notes.

## Resources

The following are helpful resources for classrooms:

- [DO-IT: Equal Access—Universal Design for Instruction](#)
- [InformED: 21 Ways to Check for Student Understanding](#)
- [DO-IT: 20 Tips for Teaching an Accessible Online Course](#)

# Best Practices for Zoom



## Multi-Modal Communication Channels in Zoom

- When setting up your meeting, select **Mute Participants Upon Entry** to minimize audio distractions as students arrive.
- In order to ensure that Zoom sessions can be captioned in postproduction, record them to the cloud. This option will also allow you to use Zoom's auto-captions, which can be configured in the settings and will be available once the cloud recording has been prepared.

For more about using [closed captioning, see this tutorial](#)

- When screen sharing any visual media, be sure to describe the content on the screen thoroughly. Don't expect students to read any content during a Zoom session unless you are also reading it aloud.
- Keep your video on when talking, even if you are screen sharing. This will allow the opportunity for lip reading.
- Invite students to share their video, but allow them to decide whether to do so. Student video sharing allows classmates to read their lips when they speak. Equally important, the choice for privacy can ease anxiety.
- When soliciting student responses in a discussion, make note of them with text on the screen. You can do this by screen sharing a document or slide that you type into, or by using Zoom's [whiteboard function](#).
- Consider ways you can build slides or other content for students to annotate. Use Zoom's [annotate function](#) to allow students to interact with content on the screen by adding stamped icons, circling/underlining key information, and adding their own text notes. Verbally describe student and instructor annotations. You can also erase annotations.
- Turn on [non-verbal feedback](#) so students may express opinions by clicking on the icons in the Participants panel.
- Each time you initiate a new screen share, your chat box will disappear. Use the Zoom menu to reopen it to avoid missing student messages.

# Co-hosts and Assistants

**Co-hosts** are recommended for large group sessions where the number of participants exceeds how many participants appear on your screen in a given moment. They may also be used for smaller groups.

Using co-hosts can help you delegate tasks and free up your time to be more present in large sessions. Use co-hosts and assistants to:

- Identify students with hands raised
- Help lead breakout rooms after the host assigns them
- Monitor the waiting room to allow late arrivals entry to the session
- Private message the host any chat comments that should be highlighted in the lecture/discussion

If you do not use a co-host, use password security instead of a waiting room when setting up a meeting to avoid missing students who arrive late. Keep in mind that co-hosts cannot perform closed captioning unless they are assigned as assistants. If you have a student who is hard of hearing and has registered with Student Success Services, an assistant will be sent to your sessions to provide real-time closed captioning. You will need to assign this role to the assistant during the session.

# Breakout Rooms

Strategic use of breakout rooms can enhance student engagement by allowing small group work. Note, however, that these sessions do not show up on the recorded archive. If you use them, consider these options:

**Stay in the main room and offer an alternative version of the group work for students watching the recording.**

Or

**Schedule group work for the end of the session (conduct it after stopping the recording).**

Before starting the Zoom session, create visual instructions for breakout room activities and save them to the cloud. Create a [tiny URL](#) so students can access the instructions.

Prepare your students for group work by giving them clear instructions in both visual and verbal formats, including the tiny URL so they can reference the instructions while they work in the breakout rooms. If you create the breakout groups manually, give students a brief question or concept to reflect on in preparation for the group work so they are engaged while you are busy assigning groups. Be sure to let students know before you return them to the main room.

## Security Measures

- Use a unique ID for large or public Zoom calls
- Require a meeting password
- Create a waiting room
- Only the host(s) should share their screen
- Create an invite-only meeting
- Lock a meeting once it starts
- Kick someone out or put them on hold
- Disable someone's camera
- Prevent animated GIFs and other files in the chat
- Disable private chat

## Resources

The following are helpful resources for Zoom:

- [Zoom: Automatically Transcribe Cloud Recordings](#)
- [Zoom: Recording Good Quality Audio to Ensure Accurate Transcripts](#)
- [Zoom: Managing and Viewing Closed Captioning](#)
- [Zoom Web Conferencing](#)
- [Tips & Tricks: Teachers Educating on Zoom](#)
- [San Francisco State University: Academic Technology Help Center—Using Breakout Rooms](#)

# Best Practices for Documents



Any documents provided by Full Sail University, whether in the classroom or through other departments, should be useable, accessible, and inclusive. Keep the following considerations in mind when creating documents:

- As much as possible, accessible electronic versions of printed documents should be made available for those who require or benefit from screen readers or braille displays.
- Care should be taken to ensure that textbooks are available in ebook formats or Kindle editions that are accessible via screen readers. Likewise, textbooks that are provided in ebook or Kindle formats should also be available as hardcopy texts to meet the needs of all students.
- Use Word and PowerPoint for their accessibility features; learn more about [Microsoft Accessibility](#) and [Apple Accessibility](#).
- When using PDF documents, design them to be accessible or create an accessible HTML or Word version. [This tutorial](#) for creating accessible PDFs has some good tips.
- Avoid the use of PDF documents presented as images and Flash; they are not easily accessible to someone using a screen reader.





# Fonts and Color Contrast

- Use only fonts recognized for being legible for a wide audience. Check out the [Best Practices for Font Styles](#) from WebAIM.
- Ensure that fonts have acceptable levels of color contrast. You can learn more about [How to Check Contrast here](#).

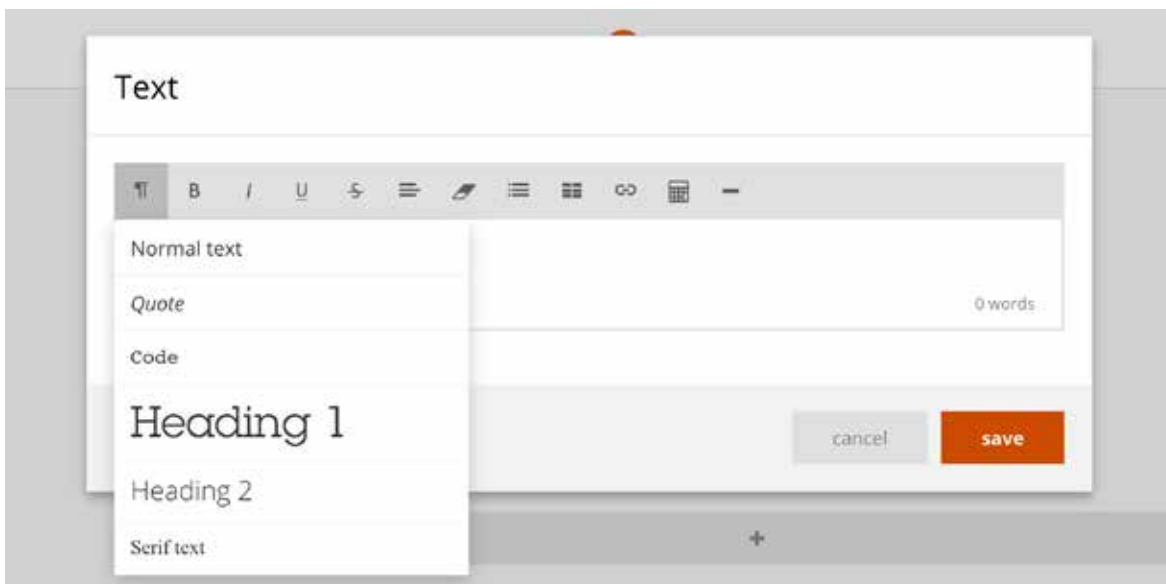
## Link Text

- Avoid using “click here” or “read more” as link titles.
- Use descriptive text to describe the link content.



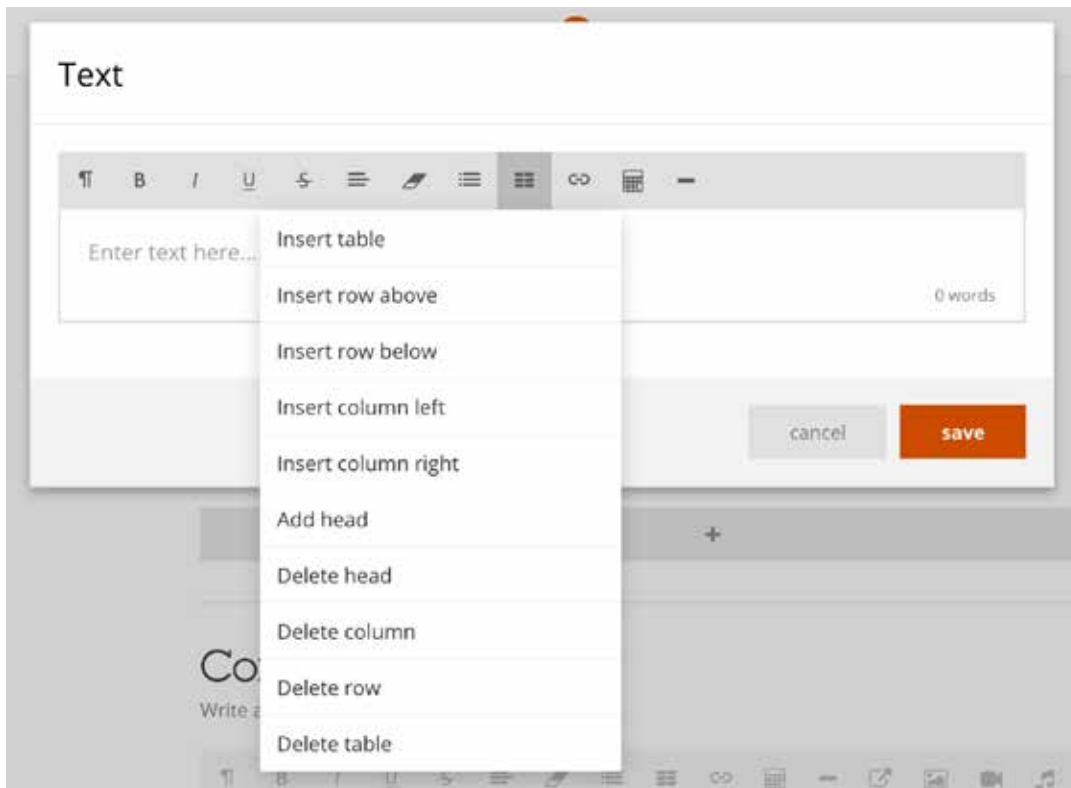
## Section Headings

- Use heading style features that are built into the LMS, Microsoft Word, Keynote, and PowerPoint.
- In your course content, consistently apply headings styles like “Heading 1” or “Heading 2.” In the LMS’s text areas, highlight the text and use the Style button to apply headings.



# Table Captions & Column Headings

- Use tables for the presentation of data only.
- Use simple tables without merged cells.
- Use headers for rows and columns.
- In your course content, tables can be created in most text areas. Inside text content blocks, add a table by clicking on the Table button. You can do things like add rows and headings using the same button.



## Resources

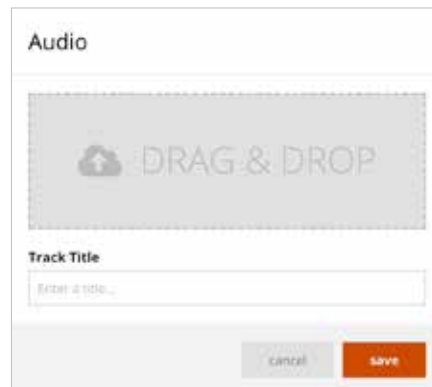
The following are helpful resources for Documents:

- [Tutorial for Creating Accessible PDFs](#)
- [Best Practices for Font Styles](#)
- [How to Check Contrast](#)

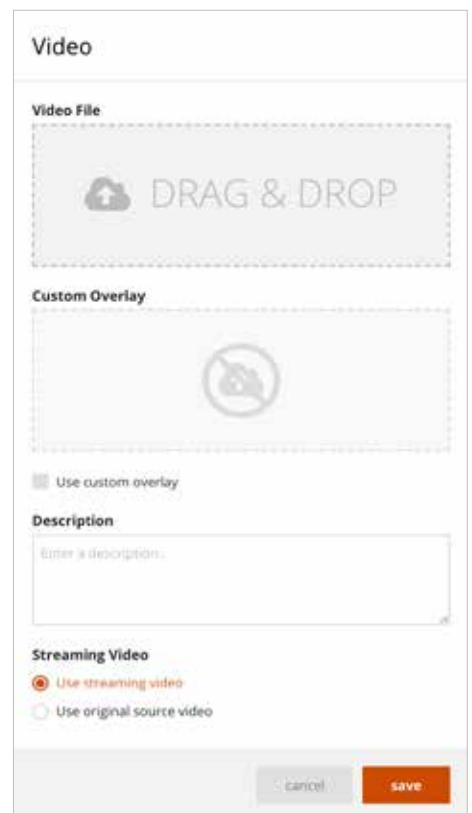
# Audio, Video, and Image Content: Best Practices

## Audio and Video

- Transcribe audio files that include speech.
- Transcribe live lectures. Learn how to [add transcripts automatically in Zoom](#).
- Add closed captions in archived lectures (Student Success Services may assign a CC transcriptionist for students who are hard of hearing). If you are transitioning from a campus class and need transcription services, reach out to Bethann Durlin at [success@fullsail.com](mailto:success@fullsail.com).
- Caption pre-recorded videos; these must be edited for accuracy. You can find out how to [view closed captions in Zoom](#) or work with [YouTube's captioning functionality](#) in these tutorials.
- In your Full Sail Online course content, provide concise yet descriptive ALT text for all video and audio content. In the LMS, use the Description field for video and the Track Title field for audio to add ALT text.

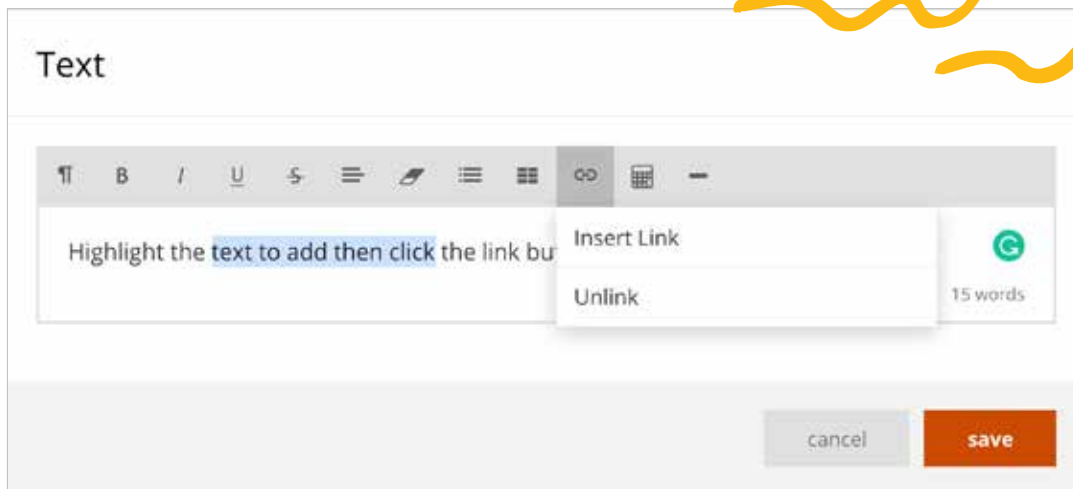


The screenshot shows the 'Audio' upload interface. At the top, the word 'Audio' is displayed. Below it is a large dashed box with a cloud icon and the text 'DRAG & DROP'. Underneath this is a 'Track Title' field with the placeholder text 'Enter a title...'. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'cancel' and 'save'.



The screenshot shows the 'Video' upload interface. At the top, the word 'Video' is displayed. Below it is a 'Video File' section with a dashed box containing a cloud icon and 'DRAG & DROP'. This is followed by a 'Custom Overlay' section with a dashed box containing a no-video icon. Below that is a checkbox labeled 'Use custom overlay'. The 'Description' section has a text area with the placeholder 'Enter a description...'. The 'Streaming Video' section has two radio buttons: 'Use streaming video' (which is selected) and 'Use original source video'. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'cancel' and 'save'.

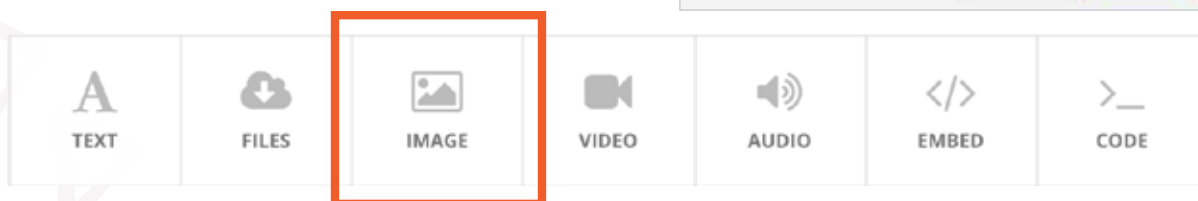
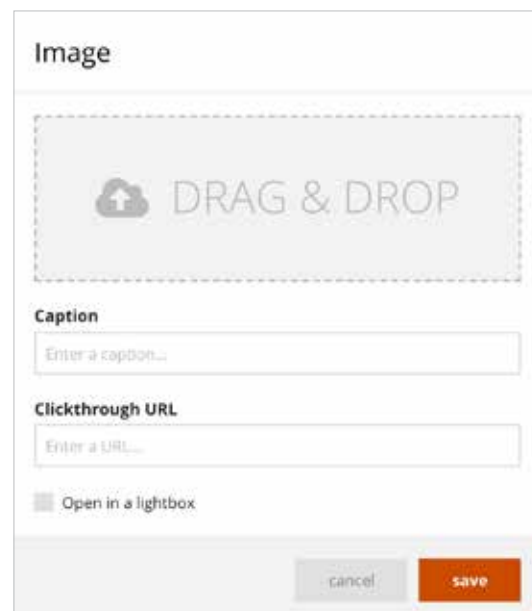
- In your course content, provide links to caption-enabled Zoom video recordings. You can use the Link button in any text area to link to your captioned Zoom recordings.



- Include text or audio description in visual demonstrations.
- Ensure that video streaming services have descriptive audio (e.g., Netflix Party, etc.).

## Images

- Use ALT text for all content images. ALT text should describe the meaning of the image. You can find some good [tips for writing ALT text from WebAIM](#).
- In your course content, take time to add concise and descriptive text in the image caption field to provide ALT text for images. In the LMS, you can use the caption field to provide ALT text.



A cluster of approximately 12 teal, hand-drawn triangles of various sizes and orientations, scattered in the upper right corner of the page.

## Resources

The following are helpful resources for Audio, Visual, and Image Content:

- [Using Audio Transcription for Cloud Recordings](#)
- [Using Alternative Text](#)