

Common Accessibility Mistakes

One way of learning how to make materials more accessible for students is to learn from the experiences of others. You won't want to miss [Tolulope Noah's Edutopia post, Mistakes I Used to Make in Digital Accessibility – and How to Fix Them](#), in which she shares nine common accessibility mistakes that she has made and how to correct them.

Mistake: Color-coding important information on handouts and slides.

Suggestion: Be sure that color isn't the only way that meaning is conveyed so that content is accessible to color-blind learners.

Mistake: Use emojis as bullet points or include them in the body of text.

Suggestion: Avoid repeating emojis over and over, and limit their use for individuals using a screen reader. Include no more than three in a document or on a slide.

Mistake: Underline text for emphasis.

Suggestion: Reserve underlining for hyperlinks.

Mistake: Include alternative text for photographs and pictures.

Suggestion: Alternative text should be concise – not more than 120 characters. Indicate whether an image is decorative. Avoid statements such as "This is a picture of..." or "Image of..." A screen reader will announce that an image is included in the document, page, or slides.

Mistake: Use images as the background on presentation slides.

Suggestion: Use a high-contrast color scheme, such as black and white. Also, avoid green and red or blue and yellow color combinations.

Mistake: Format titles and headers by changing their size or making the text bold.

Suggestion: Use the built-in heading styles. These refer to the structure of a document and assist those using screen readers with navigating the text.

Mistake: Copy and paste an entire hyperlink or rename a link with words such as "Link" or "Click here."

Suggestion: Use descriptive links. They should indicate where users are being directed.

Mistake: Use videos that are not captioned or are not accurately captioned.

Suggestion: Auto-captions are often inaccurate. Review and edit them to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing users can access the content.

Mistake: Use all lowercase letters in hashtags.

Suggestion: Use Pascal (the first letter in each word capitalized) or Camel (the first word in all lowercase followed by the first letter of each subsequent word capitalized) case. Example: #WhereIsESCToday