Where Accessibility Meets Accommodations in Online Learning

Presentation by Mary Ziegler and Kathleen Monagle for AHEAD Equity & Excellence Access in Higher Education Boston, Massachusetts, July 11, 2019
Welcome!

We are pleased to join AHEAD in creating a culture that reflects Access and Inclusion, Civility and Respect.

Our talk today is organized into 4 sections:

- **Context** of MITx
- **Program** for accessibility at MITx
- **Evidence** of learners requesting accommodation
- **Innovation** to expand access for learners with disability
Context

MITx
Open, Online Courses
MITx courses are developed and taught by MIT instructors with the aim of enhancing on-campus education, expanding access to quality educational opportunities worldwide, and advancing the understanding of teaching and learning through research.

Quote from https://openlearning.mit.edu/beyond-campus/mitx-edx-moocs/courses
176 courses, 516 course runs
MIT course curriculum reflected in each

3.76 million unique learners
75% from outside of the U.S. (most countries represented)

195,499 certificates
Awarded for successful completion of a course

MITx data as of June 18, 2019
Program

MITx
Online
Accessibility
Accessible platform

- Foundation – all MITx courses built on edX
- Partnership – shared responsibility
- Opportunity – connect with other educators through edX consortium of over 140 partners
Accessible curriculum

- Video – captions, transcripts
- Images – described in various ways
- Readings – in electronic, flexible text-based formats
- Math – accessible with MathJax or math notation
- Course information and contact shared with learners
Accommodation process

- Inclusive design is just part of accessibility
- Learners need a means to make requests
- Interactive process to meet accessibility requirements while upholding academic integrity
Evidence

Where
Accessibility meets
Accommodations
Learner requests

- 103 requests from 54 unique learners (2016-to date)
- Disabilities represented
  7% physical/medical, 27% vision, 66% invisible
- Programs
  75% enrolled in MITx MicroMasters
Types of requests

- 80% of requests relate to time
- 20% of requests relate to use of course curriculum or content
Time accommodations

97% request extended testing time

- Timed or proctored exams
- Exams open 2-48 hours (expectation of time to take exam may be less)
- All learners have flexibility to select hours within a fixed schedule of days (3-7)
Content requests

- Content may meet WCAG accessibility guidelines yet learners experience or report access needs
- MITx resolves via various means (i.e. addition to course; user setting; assistive technology)
Content examples

Chart colors indecipherable for learner with color vision deficiency
Changed colors used in chart, add other visual identifiers, improve legend

High contrast reversal dropped images that were transparent for low vision learner
Identified browser extension/add-ons for high contrast viewing.

Math not reading to screen reader user
Created usage guidelines for different screen reader/browser combinations.

Drag and Drop for learner with cerebral palsy
Re-developed drag and drop modules to be accessible via keyboard or mouse.
Elements to consider

- Accessible platform and curriculum
- Communication of process
- Course and exam variations
- Rapid timelines
- Difference in time zone, language
- Efficiencies at scale
Innovation

Open, online, accessible learning
Iterative process

Innovations in open learning

Inclusive instructional design

Disability accommodation process

Learner research and input
Questions?

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Thanks and credits

Special thanks to the people who work on and released these resources:

- MITx on edX
- Photo: Rising Behind MIT Dome with Boston Skyline in the Background, Panning to Cambridge by DronePros.net
- Presentation templates by SlidesCarnival