Preliminary results from a survey to measure the benefits of Accessibility and Universal Design Topics in Course Curricula

Background

The following are some of the preliminary results from a national survey conducted by the University of Colorado Boulder to gauge the student benefits of taking accessibility and Universal Design topics in post-secondary courses. About a dozen programs and schools with a focus on Computer Science, Digital Media, Environmental Design, or other technical or design-related programs, agreed to distribute the survey to their current students and recent graduates.

Responses received: 114

Key Findings

Students viewed Accessibility topics as valuable and of high Interest

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating “no value” and 5 indicating “crucial,” please rate the usefulness of taking a course with topics that included Universal Design and/or accessibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crucial</th>
<th>Very Valuable</th>
<th>Worthwhile</th>
<th>Some Value</th>
<th>No Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Benefits in Employment, Academic Work and Other Areas

- **70%** of the individuals who took courses with UD and accessibility topics reported that they had found learning this material to be valuable to them in employment, academics or other areas.

- **36%** of the respondents indicated specific work benefits such as “Understanding what [WCAG] Level AA accessibility is for my job” and “I'm working on an accessibility auditing contract.”
Three individuals indicated that it had helped them or likely helped them obtain a job position:

- “Definitely helped me land a job & do my job well”
- “Getting a job in health IT designing for vulnerable populations”
- “I cannot say for certain, but I feel my course work and capstone focus (UDL) was helpful in getting me this position”

**Topics Rated as Highly Valuable & Useful**

75% of those who took accessibility and UD topics identified specific topics and exercises that they found particularly useful, such as:

- live demonstrations and simulations, for example, “using voice commands to complete tasks”
- learning and using evaluation tools such as “WAVE,” color contrast evaluators, or tools to examine “accessible web design ‘in the wild’

97% plan to definitely or maybe continue to learn more about accessibility

80% of respondents did not take courses with these topics because they were not offered.

**Conclusions Based on Initial Responses**

Courses with these topics are highly valued by students who take these classes and there may be a significant number of students interested in Universal Design and accessibility topics but unable to take courses because of lack of classes offered in these subjects.

**Other Findings**

For a more extensive review of the survey findings, visit: [https://www.uduc.org/research/](https://www.uduc.org/research/)

**Participate in Survey**

Follow the instructions at [https://www.uduc.org/survey-invite/](https://www.uduc.org/survey-invite/) to learn how to disseminate the survey on your campus.

***Acknowledgments**

This work is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (#1742007019) and support from AHEAD, the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, Microsoft, AccessibilityOz, 3Play Media, Interactive Accessibility, Disability Services at the CU-Boulder and University of Colorado Boulder.

**About UDUC**

UDUC supports the teaching and inclusion of Universal Design content in university curriculum through research, disseminates of curricula resources and training and forums.

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