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O3-A4

TRAINING GUIDELINES

[Development of guidelines based on the comparative analysis O3-A3.]

by GNW

SupEFL Project

Supplemental Self-help in English as a Foreign Language for Learners with Specific Learning Differences/Difficulties

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Introduction

SupEFL - “Supplemental Self-Help in English as a Foreign Language for Learners with Specific Learning Differences“ which has been funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. The project is directed at special learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) who are experiencing difficulties with one or more of the four language systems (reading, writing, listening and speaking). We are developing self-help Open Educational Resources (OER) for learners of English with special needs in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, speaking, listening, memory, motivation and/or learning in general.

The key project audience are learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) who will be end-users and will be most interested in the final product. To reach them the project team is also targeting teachers and trainers who would want and need guidelines on how to identify such individuals, implement our self-help program and track the progress of learners with SpLDs.

This report focuses of the implmentation of O3-A4, aimed at the development of the field-work in the participating countries. A comparative analysis of results from national surveys and legislation will be summarized in this report.

O3 - A1 Analysis Guidelines	Methodology framework	To develop the methodology to be used during the national research
O3 - A2 National Research	Analysis of data obtained in during the national surveys. Conclusions and common approach at European Level.	Data processing an analysis.
O3 - A3 Comparative analysis of results	Development of field-work in participant countries	To carry out national surveys on the specific problems which emerge in the course of English language training in four systems for learners with SpLDs.
O3 - A4 Guidelines elaboration	Development of training guidelines based on the comparative analysis (O3-A3)	Methodology development, drafting learning pathways.

Table 1: Description of O3 activities and tasks

Preliminary survey to work out the guidelines

To work out an overall guideline for a mutual work we had to form a common basis for the understanding of our target group. Partners' view were clearly close to each others' view, however it came out that the countries differ significantly. It could cause difficulties for the partners if the project's guidelines would be too far from a country's legal view of our target group and the level of awareness of the problem area.

A comparative study has been carried out to identify the legislation background of the partner countries. The research based on national surveys on the legislation for learners with SpLDs.

Data collection was based on a document analysis of existing legislation and policies and also semi-structured interviews to experts in the field.

Awareness on the special learners need

The analysis of existing legislation presented in this article revealed that only in Germany there is a clear and official definition for neurologically based learning difficulties but only in Hungary dyslexia is recognized in legislation as disability although it is not recognized in this country, as a Special Educational Need. Concerning the existence of legislation to support compulsory education and higher education, only in Bulgaria and Finland there is legislation to support both educational levels. Portugal and Lithuanian promote training to enable teachers to deal with dyslexia, and in these two countries and Bulgaria there are standardized assessment difficulties provided by the state. In Bulgaria, Germany, Finland and Hungary there are anti-discrimination legislation for employees and almost all countries except Lithuania have civil institutions for neurologically based learning.

The countries differ significantly, the results of the data analysis show that we can find a mutual level of understanding of the ways how materials, instructions and training can be designed for special learners.

Introduction to the guidelines

Neurologically based singularity of information processing is the basic characteristic that makes special learners different from that of the majority. Beside the difficulty of acquiring literacy, it is a life-long task for them to tackle learning materials, especially verbal materials that is hard for them to grasp. It is therefore a great help if they receive information prepared and presented in a mode that suits their way of thinking.

Learning and learning materials for special learners don't differ substantially from the methods and materials that are used in general. However what is good for the special learners is good for others, as well. Problems that make life and learning difficult for special learners are vexing for other learners, too.

Long sentences and periods, not segmented texts, opaque forms or boring and dull talks are torturing experiences for most of the people. Once one learns how to present information in way that suits a special learner, one will acquire a knowledge that guarantees success everywhere. The problems of the special learners are everybody's problems magnified. That way the guidelines aim to give an inclusive learning design.

There are many sources to find guidelines for dyslexic learners that helped us to work out the guidelines for our project.

The **Dyslexia Style Guide by the British Dyslexia Association** (see in the Annex) is an elaborated guide to prepare materials for dyslexic users. However we need more than to design materials, we have to work out a learning program. Thus our guidelines have more dimensions to consider.

Inclusive design

Accessibility means an accessible environment, however universal or inclusive design refers to a broader idea of producing buildings and products that are accessible to people having disadvantages for different reasons (disabilities, old or very young age, etc.), as well as for everyone else. Inclusive design is the future's approach to use the advantages of diversity.

The concept and solutions in the design have changed according to the changes in the view of differences:

1. Uniform - environment designed to the average, the so called 'normal'.
2. Accessible - environment designed with solutions for extra needs and less barriers.
3. Universal/inclusive - environment designed to diverse needs.

A learning environment can follow the initiative of inclusive design using the best teaching methods, because these are the ways of the effective trainers and learners.

Special learners' characteristics and learning second language

Special learners have many excellent abilities to use in learning and information processing. For example they are visual, they are holistic. They are good in activities where visual stimuli help the solution, they are effective when they can manipulate, and stirring events happens. They like intellectual challenge if the task is by their leading abilities.

On the other hand special learners have some deficiencies. Most of the deficiencies stem from their different way of information processing. That is why their deficiencies sometimes root from the same abilities which can be excellent.

- Special learners are usually holistic learners, so they leave out of consideration details, thus they often confuse similar things,
- They can be poor in the perception of directions, orientations, relations.
- Their sequential abilities, the step by step information processing is usually weak.
- They may have poor phonological abilities.
- They make many mistakes and the incorrect forms rival always with the correct forms.

These are traits that hinder literacy skills. So the learning material has to be given through multiple channels, it has to be interactive and follow the natural way of literacy skill's learning. The lessons have to be built up to lead a slow, gradual progress.

Summarized: Though special learners differ in many ways from the rest of learners, the generally used most effective teaching methods are good for them. The best teaching is the way they can learn, while the other learners can survive the usual, not effective teaching.

Preparing materials for special learners

The first important area is to identify the proper types and design of materials for special learners.

Paper based documents

Every layout editor knows that the eye slips easily reading lines that are too long. This is way they use columns. Shorter lines are easier to see through. This helps fast and poor readers, as well. Lines of 12-14 cm in length are still transparent.

There are numerous beautiful fonts. Fonts are usually chosen so as to fit the mood of the text. However, for dyslexics, firm Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Comic Sans fonts are better. The question of size is not particularly essential, and is rather a matter of sharp-sightedness. Of course, bigger letters are more legible. Text size 12pt is the most appropriate.

Many people are not aware of the fact that one of the problems of some poor readers is sensitivity to contrast. Letters start to dance because of the sharp contrast between the shiny white paper and the black ink. It is therefore better for them to read in a place that is not so brightly lit.

If we can select the quality of the paper, the best is to use pale yellow. Recycled paper can be favourable, too. If we cannot select the colour of the paper ourselves, it is then best to use less sharp colours for the text.

The characteristics of dyslexia-friendly written materials are:

1. short lines,
2. Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Comic Sans fonts of size 12,
3. pale yellow-coloured paper,
4. legible but not sharp-coloured letters.

These characteristics apply to all paper based writing. Be it a book, notes, hand-outs, tests, questionnaires or other forms, it will be by far more easy to use if it complies with these conditions.

Long words and long sentences are difficult to manage. Special learners get lost among the various relations and references within the sentence. It is therefore better for the text to be simpler and clearer.

There exists a so-called vagueness index that shows how difficult a text is to read and how vague it is.

Books to choose for special learners

One can compare books and even one's own writings with the help of the vagueness index.

Vagueness index = $(100/A)+B$

A – Number of sentences in a 100-word excerpt

B – Long words (more than 3 syllables) in a 100-word excerpt

Traditional sources of information, that is, books, cause a lot of difficulties for the special learners. Even recently written textbooks contain too much continuous text. Segmentation is often indiscriminate, and the relation between randomly linked elements cannot be seen.

A book can be a friend of anybody if its structure and text do not pose an obstacle to reading. A good example for this is J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter, which made many dyslexic children readers throughout the world. What is its secret?

- short, simple sentences,

- image-like representation,
- an easy-to-follow structure
- an interesting theme.

Even though not any material can be rendered as interesting as Harry Potter (which is why not all textbooks will make a best-seller), but the above characteristics will make any material more easily accessible.

In the case of scientific literature, the main requirement for its content is to be comprehensible and correct. It does not need to create the appearance of being scientific through the use of difficult words, periods and complicated turns.

A well-edited book contains for every chapter:

- an abstract
- a table of contents
- a summary

The texts should be segmented, and comprehension should be assisted by pictures, figures and simple tables. Important pieces of information should be highlighted.

Notes and handouts for special learners

Abstracts and notes help special learners as well as everybody a lot. Be it a short overview of the material or a handout, it means a lot for the reader to receive an appropriately structured and written work.

All that has been said about the appearance of books pertains to notes and handouts, as well. The function and the use of these written materials is, however, different. They usually carry shorter and more concrete pieces of information.

If something cannot be written down on one page, it is not worth writing down.

In any case, one should endeavour to present one theme per page. Even if this attempt is unsuccessful, it is important to have coherent parts on each page.

New themes should begin a new page. It is more waste of paper if for the sake of saving a few pages one uses up several needless sheets of paper that the student cannot use, the notes and handouts being compressed to the point of being unintelligible.

Tests for special learners

Tests are a real Gordian knot for the special learners. This is not because they do not know the material well enough, but because the questions have to be read and interpreted very accurately. Since many words, concepts and especially relational words can be vague, the twisted wording of tests can be a great obstacle.

Special learners are usually unable to fathom what the question is in the first place. They do not see the often only subtle differences between the answers. This is because these constitute verbal phrases and relationships, which require the appropriate use of words. If the questions are on a different page and answers have to be given on a separate form, special learners are faced with a further complication. They will miss and mix rows and columns.

Special learners understand and see through the learned material in vain, their knowledge seems useless in tests. However, tests can be devised that is solvable for dyslexics, as well.

Good tests contain definite questions and definite answers.

For example:

1. What characterizes material that is easily readable even for dyslexics?

Underline the correct answer.

1. Sharp, visible and large letters, Times font.
2. Short lines, 12pt Arial font, little contrast.
3. There is no writing a dyslexic can read.

If possible, one should avoid double negation, because it confusing for those who are unsure in the area of relations.

It is often easier to devise questions containing negation. This is indeed a more difficult type of question and requires more stable knowledge, but special learners will with great probability ignore the word 'not', given their holistic reading method. Owing to this, they will not be able to answer the question or will waste much time to understand it.

Lectures and tutorials for special learners

A lecture should never be a simple communication of information. The task of the lecturer is to affect the audience – to make them build in the new knowledge, to influence their point of views, attitudes and behaviours.

There are lots of people in all communities for whom not only reading, but also writing, counting and following continuous speech is more taxing than for the average.

Be it a university class, a conference talk, further training or even a work report, an exposition at a meeting, the talk should take a form that suits for everybody, so for people with neurologically based achievement difficulties, as well.

In order to maintain attention, render the content interesting and comprehensible, the lecturer has to structure the talk, just like the written material. This can be achieved through their voice, their gestures and with involving the audience. An interactive lecture is invariably more effective than a one-sided communication.

A lecture that is easy to follow even for dyslexics is:

- structured, segmented,
- interactive,
- supported by visual aids
- concrete examples
- humour, if possible.

Today, technical tools make it possible to illustrate lectures. Pictures, figures and texts can be attached to presentations. These PowerPoint materials are fairly easy to edit. The audience might need to be assisted with visual material even in the case of a short lecture.

A PowerPoint presentation in itself does not solve all problems. The material has to be structured appropriately. The fact that basically everything that the lecturer says will appear on the projector is no great help. It is for the lecturer, though, being able to read it off the screen, and the audience can also read it in the meantime. This turns the lecture into a nice, joint reading, but it will not be as effective as it could be.

Another common problem is when the lecturer is so virtuouse as to use several effects requiring eyes and ears. This distracts attention and confuses the audience.

The appropriate presentation follows the talk of the lecturer with additional material:

- it shows pictures and figures,

- it highlights connections and correspondences,
- it displays short texts, preferably words, especially specialized terms,
- the audience can read and copy quotes, if they wish.

Instructions for special learners

One of the big problems of dyslexics is that it is difficult for them to follow long sequences with many elements. Instructions are like this, be they given orally or in writing, at school and at work. What is more, one also often has to follow longer, complex instructions in private life.

It is usually needless to give instructions in complicated wording. Short and comprehensible assertions are understandable and can be executed. Shortened sentences do not need to turn into short, impolite commands. It is sufficient for the wording to be more concise, and the stress does not need to be greater.

If the instructions or the message cannot be given briefly, then it has to be cut into more chunks, segmented for the dyslexic.

Written instructions can only be interpreted when itemized. Continuous text will not be clear cut. Tasks, details will be lost and the whole instruction will lose its meaning. Compare the instructions given in A and B.

A.

Go to the <http://moodle.tmpk.uni-obuda.hu> website. Once there, login at the main page and find the course "Inclusion with Alternate Media" under the Free Courses. Get into the "Learning technologies", and do the exercises after you went through all the materials.

B.

1. Go to the <http://moodle.tmpk.uni-obuda.hu> website
2. Login on the main page.
3. Find: Free courses: Inclusion with Alternate Media
4. Get the topic: Learning technologies
5. Go through the materials
6. Do the exercises.

In the case of oral instructions, there is a further problem, namely, that the special learner may not only forget the message, but due to inattention, might not receive the message in the first place.

To ascertain whether the recipient indeed received message, it is worth asking back tactfully: So what exactly are you going to do? With this repetition the memory will sink in and the transfer of the message will be certain.

We can ensure in advance to have the other's attention by taking up eye contact, perhaps touching them to make them turn to us.

Study skills and special learners

To work out a program for special learners we have to identify the target group's ways of learning to take into consideration when working on the program.

Special learners can learn well using appropriate learning methods. However, even learning methods related to the learning style of the majority are not acquired by students at school. How something can be learned barely forms part of the education. Education is concerned almost exclusively with what has to be learned. There are thus very few who are able to learn well. Special learners, who have their own distinctive learning style, definitely do not learn to learn well during the education suited to the majority.

Traditional learning methods build upon precisely the weak points of these learners, so failure is understandable. Methods building on strengths make learning easier and more efficient.

Since the main information processing method of the special learners is global (simultaneous, visual), effective learning is based on this, as well. Pictures, figures, diagrams and other visual tools have to have a place in learning.

A c-map (or concept map, mind map) is a visual representation that charts the material on one page. Alternatively, the term Mind Map can be used instead, which is the invention of Tony Buzan.

Knowledge relating to one topic can not only be listed as entries underneath each other, but distributed in space, too. Visual representation helps in remembering the material. In drawing the main branches, the important aspects of the topic get highlighted and the material will receive structure.

The concept of the concept map

In drawing a mind map, a few rules are worth observing, since they contribute to the efficiency.

- The layout of the paper is landscape, since this is the position that best fits the form of our visual field.
- Big capital letters are used, because they are more easy to remember and are stored in a pictorial way.
- A proper c-map starts with a central picture of the theme.
- From this, the lines of the main topics branch off, which can, in turn, be divided into subtopics.
- Write on the lines starting from the centre, because they make the picture ordered and easy to follow.
- The 45o rule: Do not write at a rake angle, since a text with an inclination of more than 45o does read well and hinders remembering the material.
- Colours help remembering and can highlight and emphasize. They also make figures more beautiful, pleasing to the eye and more agreeable to learn.
- Pictures, drawings carry a lot of information: one picture can be worth a hundred words. Less writing is needed and it is easier to remember.
- Signs, codes help orientation and can interpret information.

Three basic rules

In making the map, three important points should be taken into consideration. These are the most important helps in the special learners learning in general:

Less is more.

Transparent structure.

Using the whole of the brain.

1. „Less is more” should be one of the most important thoughts for special learners and people working with them. It calls attention to patience. If we want to solve all the difficulties quickly, even the best methods will not produce results. If we want to make up for the deficits in one go using one of the good methods, we may cause even more trouble. Major advances can be made by wisely amassing small achievements. It is better to learn less, but thoroughly, so that what has been learned will not get confused.

C-maps are based on associative thinking. Related knowledge will be activated through the help of the keywords and the pictures. The less information there is on the figure, the more probable it is that one can remember it. This is how less will be more on a mind map.

2. Placed in a transparent structure, the details are incorporated into the whole. Clear rendering of thoughts is essential for special learners. Ignoring details will lead to vague concepts, which will become a hindrance for learning.

The global thinking of special learners can be made effective by an adequate use of space. Void is part of space. In music, silence and pauses have just as much significance as notes. In the same way, emptiness has significance in space. Spatial positioning helps a lot in remembering the material. This is one of the reasons why separating the elements is important.

3. Using the whole brain. The picture and the text together form a whole. The two roads – verbal and visual – complement and support each other in human thinking. They are related to the two hemispheres of the brain. Their joint use involves using the whole of the brain. Special learners usually manage pictures better, but speech is one of the bases of human thinking and has a definitive role in processing information that is carried by pictures.

The advantages of c-maps for special learners

C-maps are advantageous in other respects, too. Besides being holistic, it also gives an overview of the structure of the topic. It can, therefore, be used very well in a global thinking style. As a visual representation, it suits the special learners fine, as they think in pictures more easily. Less reading and writing is required using the c-map. As regarding selecting and remembering information, it is important that all knowledge is contained on one page.

Other useful tips

- What cannot be written on one page is not worth writing down. When a topic is more complex, then its parts should be represented on separate page. Thereby, usable bits of whole will be remembered.
- Visualization, that is, drawing a given concept or piece of knowledge helps a lot in understanding and, consequently, in remembering. Everything can be drawn, since our imagination – as the word itself indicates – works with images. Our knowledge is in many respects produced by our imagination on the basis of pictures. Special learners can be particularly efficient in this. Therefore, it is worth representing knowledge visually on paper as well, rather than merely in our heads and imagination.
- Icons are visualizations. You can draw 'Exit', you can see many concepts in form of icons. The picture helps the memory. If you want to learn the pronunciation of the word, again, an image can help.
- C-maps and learning materials are really efficient when there are plenty of pictures in them. A drawing made of a concept or a given part of the material can play an important role in remembering.
- One mode of multiple channel learning, which involves the use of more sensory organs and modalities, is learning through pictures, making drawings. Another possibility is the more differentiated use of the auditory channel, that is, hearing. The material can be associated to various tunes. Poems can be memorized more easily when set to music.
- Understanding a concept can be facilitated not only by pictures, but by motions, as well. For special learners, trying out something in practice renders clarification of concepts possible. During activities, known data will become knowledge through touch and motions.

For example, the often baffling difference between circular and rotational motions will be cleared at once and will be remembered forever, if one has a chance to try out what it is like revolving around one's own axis and circulating around another body, when the axis will be the axis of the other person's body.

Minimal expectation for a second language learning program for special learners

1. Multimedia based
2. Built up from passive listening levels towards more demanding active language production.
3. Activities include the most popular aspects of everyday web and mobile activity of the target group - consideration of the learner's interest areas.
4. Focused on success and positive feedback

1. Multimedia based

- Spoken text is seen in written form
- Written text appears in spoken form
- It is interactive
- It is supported by pictures, drawings, photos and motions, videos, cameras.

2. Built up from passive listening levels towards more demanding active language production

- The text is always available
- The learner doesn't have to produce text before knowing it very well.
- The task is only to repeat, or later on the next level to copy the text.
- Another type of task is to recognize or connect the text to the voice, picture, etc.

3. Activities include the most popular aspects of everyday web and mobile activity of the target group - consideration of the learner's interest areas.

- Situations concerning social networking – Skype, chat and forum groups, mobile calls
- Editing and sharing personal data
- Playing on-line games, quest, search
- Everyday work and private situations
- Individual interest

4. Focused on success and positive feedback

- **The 'over learning' is the safe side.**
The specialty of the special learners' information processing is that they never ever should err. Once an information gone wrong, it would remain an unsure item.

Motivation is one of the main weak points of the special learners' learning. The special learner has collected a lot of bad experience and failure during schooling. They are convinced that learning is not their area of success.

Suggested structure for a second language learning program for special learners

1. Listening and speaking – No reading and no writing
2. Reading – phonological abilities to improve
3. Reading and writing – spelling and grammar to achieve the phonological awareness

1. Listening and speaking – No reading and no writing

The material consists of situations, games and tasks where the learner can listen and see the words, sentences and the short instructions, and can see pictures of the words and situations of the communication.

- a) The learner is not expected to produce sentences or give any feed back.
- b) Production is the learners' decision.
- c) Production is expected as repetition of the material.
- d) The learner answers questions.
- e) The learner creates own sentences.

2. Reading – phonological abilities to improve

The learner mustn't pronounce incorrectly the words. The reading production is starting when it is 100% sure that the learner knows the pronunciation of the given material. The material is based on the material of the first phase.

- a) The learner reads the text together with the voice while follows the words. Colours or any other signing helps.
- b) The learner repeats the text.
- c) The learner reads the text, and the voice repeats. Thus the learner can check the own production.

3. Reading and writing - spelling and grammar to achieve the phonological awareness

The learner starts to write when the production is 100% surely correct. The learner mustn't see the words written incorrectly.

- a) The learner copies the words and sentences. The computer gives feedback.
- b) The learner writes those words and sentences that are already in the inner lexicon. The computer gives feedback.
- c) The learner writes sentences. The computer gives feedback.

Annex: Dyslexia Style Guide by the British Dyslexia Association

1. Dyslexia Friendly Text.

The aim is to ensure that written material takes into account the visual stress experienced by some dyslexic people, and to facilitate ease of reading.

Adopting best practice for dyslexic readers has the advantage of making documents easier on the eye for everyone.

Media.

- Paper should be thick enough to prevent the other side showing through.
- Use matt paper rather than glossy. Avoid digital print processing which tends to leave paper shiny.
- Avoid white backgrounds for paper, computer and visual aids. White can appear too dazzling. Use cream or a soft pastel color. Some dyslexic people will have their own color preference.

Font.

- Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial and Comic Sans. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet, Calibri.
- Font size should be 12-14 point. Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font.
- Use dark colored text on a light (not white) background.
- Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for color-blind individuals.

For more detailed information and discussion on fonts, see the [BDA New Technologies Committee website](#):

Headings and Emphasis.

- Avoid underlining and italics: these tend to make the text appear to run together. Use bold instead.
- AVOID TEXT IN BLOCK CAPITALS: this is much harder to read.
- For Headings, use larger font size in bold, lower case.
- Boxes and borders can be used for effective emphasis.

Layout.

- Use left-justified with ragged right edge.
- Avoid narrow columns (as used in newspapers).
- Lines should not be too long: 60 to 70 characters.
- Avoid cramping material and using long, dense paragraphs: space it out.
- Line spacing of 1.5 is preferable.
- Avoid starting a sentence at the end of a line.
- Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose.

Writing Style.

- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style.
- Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation.
- Use active rather than passive voice.
- Avoid double negatives.
- Be concise.

Increasing accessibility.

- Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures.
- Pictograms and graphics help to locate information.
- Lists of 'do's and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice.
- Avoid abbreviations if possible or provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.

- For long documents include a contents page at the beginning and an index at end.

Checking Readability.

- Use the spell check option on your word processor.
- Check long documents in sections, so that you know which parts are too hard.
 - Flesch Reading Ease score: Rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 70 to 80.
 - Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score: Rates text on a U.S. grade-school level. For example, a score of 5.0 means that a fifth grader, i.e. a Year 6, average 10 year old, can understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 5.0, by using short sentences, not by dumbing down vocabulary.

2. Accessible Formats

It is important that documents and publications are prepared to be accessible in alternative formats for people with visual impairments or reading difficulties. These should include availability in electronic format which can be read by screen reading software.

Printed documents are created in computers, so it should be possible to issue the electronic files. Some documents will only be available electronically.

- Word files are the easiest for individual viewing preferences and for listening.
- Portable Document Format (PDF) files keep the presentation better than Word files, but are not as easy to use.
- We suggest offering both the source Word files and derived PDF files where possible.
- Publicize availability of accessible formats.

3. Website design

Website design must consider all the above factors together with the following points.

Research shows that readers access text at a 25% slower rate on a computer. This should be taken into account when putting information on the web. When a website is completed, check the site and information for accessibility by carrying out these simple checks.

- Navigation should be easy. A site map is helpful.
- Use graphics, images, and pictures to break up text, while bearing in mind that graphics and tables may take a long time to download.
- Very large graphics make pages harder to read.
- Offer alternate download pages in a text reader friendly style.
- Where possible design web pages which can be downloaded and read off-line.
- Moving text creates problems for people with visual difficulties. Text reading software is unable to read moving text.
- Contents links should show which pages have been accessed.
- Most users prefer dark print on a pale background. Color preferences vary.
- Some websites offer a choice of background colors.
- Encourage the use of hyperlinks at the end of sentences.
- Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for color-blind individuals.
- Make sure that it is possible for users to set their own choice of font style and size, background and print colors.