Institute for Leadership in Education Development (I-LED)

Below are some key tech tips that can help you enhance your web-based offerings.

TECH TIP #1

Mind maps can store and structure vast amounts of information and are useful for conducting free-thinking exercises. They display hierarchy, show relationships between single topics and enable you to see the "big picture" at a glance. These features also make mind maps an ideal tool to present complex information to others.

TECH TIP #2

If you plan to use video for distance learning, make sure to also attach or provide a text script of the video for learners. This is a part of Universal Design and should occur as a matter of course, and not only when you have participants that request specific access accommodations.

TECH TIP #3

In order to facilitate peer review of learners' work from a distance, use email, cloud document sharing services such as Google docs, videoconferencing tools, discussion forums, or if available, Learning Management System (LMS) assignment tools to redistribute learner submissions to others for feedback.

TECH TIP #4

Every learning module should start with these four slides: A slide asking viewers to turn on their computer speakers (if the module uses audio), a title slide, an agenda, and a slide on how to use the navigation system.

TECH TIP #5

Chunking-dividing lessons into "bite-size" pieces-has long been advocated as an important tool for students with disabilities. Chunking requires good structure. Using well thought-out descriptive headings will enable users with disabilities to navigate quickly throughout the document. In order for screen readers to read the content properly, content must include properly constructed headers.

TECH TIP #6

Online portfolios, or e-portfolios, are a vehicle to collect, organize, and share student work with anyone the student chooses. Institutional LMS have e-portfolio tools, but on a budget, students can also create e-portfolios on blogging platforms or individual websites.

TECH TIP #7

Lectures are the easiest learning activities to convert to online and offer many benefits such as: reusability (record a series of lectures); flexibility (students can watch when they want and review them as many times as needed); portability (students can take lectures on their phones or MP3 players); efficiency; and access to files through an LMS, a social media site, or a streaming media server. Don't forget adult learning considerations, however. A lecture is still a lecture whether it's delivered live or online.

TECH TIP #8

Social Media is every-changing and can intimidate some of us. When utilizing social media for change or for education, we must remember these key considerations. When maintaining a digital presence, it's more important than ever to have a level of **transparency** and authenticity. You should admit/acknowledge mistakes or shortcomings, be truthful in crisis or controversy. People can see right through your barriers. You've often heard: think before you speak. In the digital world, it's **search before you type**. Whether you are blogging or posting in an online classroom, make sure it's right first. Bad information spreads like crazy online and it makes you look lazy or ignorant when you contribute to it. Before you use any social media site or tool, spend some time **listening first**. See what others do, observe how they type, and see what kind of content resonates with your audience. Don't just assume that you know what your readers want. Social media is a two-way conversation: treat it like a telephone, not a megaphone. People want engaging content, not a sales brochure. If you **respect others' language and norms**, they'll find it much more

endearing. Sometimes the best way to learn a language is just being immersed by it, so just start practicing. Languages change and adapt.

TECH TIP #9

A prominent distance education researcher Borje Holmberg claimed that students would better engage with static content if the content was written in a conversational tone similar to an instructor talking with a student rather than the kind of language typically found in a textbook.

TECH TIP #10

Perhaps the most important tip: consider your own tech support and the tech capabilities your learner may or may not have. Always provide access to tech assistance and do not assume all learners have experience with the different ways to learn online.