# **Temple University Center for the Advancement of Teaching Logo**

# **Accessibility How-To:**

# **Descriptive Links**

Descriptive links are hyperlinks whose text provides clear, meaningful information about where the link leads. Descriptive links act as signposts, guiding students to the resources they need. They are especially crucial for students using screen readers or other assistive technologies, but benefit all students by improving ease of navigation and comprehension.

## Why Descriptive Links Matter for Accessibility (POUR)

* **Operability:** Users navigate links in different ways, such as by tabbing from link to link or using voice input. Descriptive links make navigation smoother and more efficient, avoiding unnecessary barriers to operation.
* **Understandability:** Descriptive links help users understand their purpose without need for extra context, benefiting users with visual, cognitive, or motor disabilities who may struggle with unclear links.

## What to Avoid

* **Vague Phrases**: Avoid "click here," "read more," "learn more," or similar phrases, especially by themselves. These provide no context and are unhelpful.
* **URLs as Link Text**: Don't simply paste the URL as the link. It's often long, intimidating, and doesn't tell the student what the linked page is about.
* **Duplicate Link Text**: Avoid using the same link text for different links, even if the destination is a similar resource. This creates confusion and frustration.

## What to Do

* **Use Concise Language**: While links should be as long as is needed to convey their purpose, in general shorter links are easier to progress through.
* **Make sure Link Text Makes sense out of Context**: Text should be understandable on its own, while also making sense within the surrounding context of the sentence or paragraph.
* **Indicate Resource & File Type when applicable**. When linking to a video mark it as such (e.g., “Video: How to Create Descriptive Links”). When linking to a file, indicate the file type (e.g., "Course Syllabus (PDF)," "Lecture Slides (PPTX)").

## Editing or Adding Links for Accessibility

Follow these steps to ensure your links are accessible and descriptive. These steps are specifically for Google Docs, but the process is similar in other applications. Consider using keyboard shortcuts for faster editing!

## To Edit an Existing Link in a Document:

1. Highlight the linked text.
2. Right-click the link and choose “Edit link” from the pop-up menu.
3. Tip: Use the shortcut Ctrl+K (Windows) or Cmd+K (Mac).
4. In the “Text” field, revise the link text to make it descriptive and meaningful.
5. Click “Apply” to save your changes.

## To Add a New Link to a Document:

1. Highlight the text you want to turn into a link.
2. Right-click and select “Insert link” from the pop-up menu.
3. Tip: Use the shortcut Ctrl+K (Windows) or Cmd+K (Mac).
4. Paste or type the desired URL in the “Link” field.
5. Ensure the text for the link in the “Text” field is descriptive and relevant.
6. Click “Apply” to insert the link.