Blackboard Ally Task Scenarios and Workshop Plan

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Sample Staff Task Scenario

There were five staff task scenarios and two for students and these were used as the basis for training design and documentation. Task scenarios are click-by-click inventories of a specific task-based situation or job. Writing these scenarios can help to avoid missing steps when teaching new software and designing support materials. Please note that our VLE (Blackboard Learn) was transitioning from being called studentcentral to My Studies at the time of writing.

Task Scenario 1

Project Title: Using Blackboard Ally
Date: 19/07/20
Authors: Fiona MacNeill
Confirmed by users (or their representatives): TBC

This document describes details of a key task using the software.
DONE - Tutorial document is needed for this task. – Include in training.

Scenario 1: Check existing documents: Scanned PDFs without OCR

Practical Goal: Learn what is wrong with the document using the Ally report tool and resolve the problem.

Context: On a personal computer connected to the Internet using a web browser at home. User will login to the VLE and open their module, then view their Study Materials area. It is likely that they will be running other software such as MS Outlook concurrently, as well as other office productivity software on the computer.

User/s: Academic staff; Professional staff who create student-facing resources (SSGT, library).

User is accessing their module for the first time since Ally has been turned on in the VLE. They will be shown a small visual dial next to each piece of content. The visual dials are colour-coded in traffic light colours: red and first interval on dial = low accessibility; orange and middle interval on dial = medium accessibility; light green and near to last interval on dial = high accessibility; deep green and at final interval on dial = perfect.

A red dial at the lowest interval is shown next to an existing PDF document which is attached to an 'item' or as a 'file' in Study Materials.

1. Click on red dial. Read what the Ally report says: "0% This PDF is scanned".
2. Judgement call: what type of PDF is it? An article or a scan from a book OR a hand drawn working/diagram which cannot be made accessible.
    a. If an article or scan from a book contact the library for advice. This PDF needs to be replaced.
    b. If it is hand drawn working/diagram, can written description be added to this file to make it more accessible? This file may need to be left as-is [no further action].
3. When the article or scan from a book has been replaced, the original should be removed from the module. Click on Files > Module code link.
4. Click 'Show All'. Use ctrl and f (cmd and f on Mac) on the keyboard to search for the file.
5. Click the chevon next to the file and select delete.
6. Go back to Study Materials and click the chevron to delete the 'item' or 'file' content item. The item will be red.
7. If item/file is difficult to find, go to Packages and Utilities > Check course links. This will list broken links and their folder location.
8. Go back to Study Materials and delete these links.
9. Log out of studentcentral/My Studies (VLE).
10. Close web browser.

Sample Student Task Scenarios

Task Scenario 1

Project Title: Using Blackboard Ally
Date: 19/07/20
Authors: Fiona MacNeill
Confirmed by users (or their representatives): TBC

Use Blackboard guidance, library guidance for ePub and OS accessibility guidance pages.

Scenario 1: Download content from VLE in a different format

Practical Goal: Use Ally to convert a file available in the VLE to a different digitally accessible format.

Context: On a personal computer, smartphone or tablet connected to the Internet using a web browser or mobile web browser (e.g. Safari, Chrome) at home or university over Wi-Fi or over 3/4G. User will login to the VLE and open a module, then view the Study Materials area. If on a smartphone or tablet they will be able to app switch to open any downloads. If on a personal computer (desktop/laptop)

User/s: Students; Professional staff supporting students (SSGT, library).

User is accessing a module for the first time since Ally has been turned on in the VLE. They want to convert materials to a different format so that they can more easily read the content.

They would like to download lecture slides in a different format to facilitate font adjustment and to use the speech-to-text tools on their computer or smartphone/tablet.

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1. Click on "A↓" on the right of the document.
2. Select the desired format from the list based on the guidance provided.
3. Press 'Download' and wait for the format to generate.

In a web browser:
4. Select 'Save File' in the pop-up confirmation for the generated file.
5. Open the file in default or specialist software.
6. Adjust the file if/as needed based on options available in the software.
7. Return to the web browser.
8. Log out of studentcentral/My Studies.
9. Close web browser.

On a smartphone or tablet:
4. Press 'Download' to confirm the download of the generated file.
5. Press on download folder icon on the top-right of browser.

6. Press on downloaded file to open in the default app based on format. Refer to LibGuide for adjustments related to ePub format.
7. App switch to mobile web browser.
8. Log out of studentcentral/My Studies.
9. Close web browser.

Task Scenario 2

Project Title: Using Blackboard Ally
Date: 19/07/20
Authors: Fiona MacNeill
Confirmed by users (or their representatives): TBC

Add this information to our accessibility statement

Scenario 2: Ask for help to report an issue with a document

Practical Goal: Use the reporting tool in Ally, available to students via 'help' in the tool to report an issue with alternative formats for a document.

Context: On a personal computer, smartphone or tablet connected to the Internet using a web browser or mobile web browser (e.g. Safari, Chrome) at home or university over Wi-Fi or over 3/4G. User will login to the VLE and open a module, then view the Study Materials area. If on a smartphone or tablet they will be able to app switch to open any downloads. If on a personal computer (desktop/laptop)

User/s: Students.

User is accessing a module for the first time since Ally has been turned on in the VLE. They want to convert materials to a different format so that they can more easily read the content.

The user would like to download a PDF in an ePub alternative format to facilitate font adjustment, but they have found that the alternative format produced is missing information and is not formatted correctly.

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1. Click on "A↓" on the right of the document.
2. Select the desired format from the list based on the guidance provided.
3. Press 'Download' and wait for the format to generate.

In a web browser:
4. Select 'Save File' in the pop-up confirmation for the generated file.
5. Open the file in default or specialist software. Note that there are issues with the generated file.
6. Return to the web browser.
7. Click on "A↓" on the right of the document.

8. Click on 'Help'.

Download alternative formats ▾   ✕

○ 📄 **Tagged PDF**
   Structured PDF for improved use with assistive technology

○ 🔗 **HTML**
   For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices

○ 📖 **ePub**
   For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers

○ 📊 **Electronic braille**
   BRF version for use on electronic braille displays

○ 🎵 **Audio**
   MP3 version for listening

○ 📄 **BeeLine Reader**
   Enhanced version for easier and faster on-screen reading

○ 🌐 **Translated version**
   A machine translated version of the original document

❓ Help

By downloading an alternative format, you agree with the Terms of Use

Cancel   A↓ Download

=learn&platformUi=#

9. Write a help report following the instructions. Click Send.

Help   ✕

Browse documentation

Explore information and help pages about the accessibility of module content.

Browse help

If you need to report an issue with a document or need an alternative format which is
not available, contact us using the 'Request help' form provided below.

Please include the following information in your message:

- **Your name** (First/Last)
- **Describe the problem.** Include details of the resource you want to access and
  the problems you experienced trying to access it.
- **Request alternative format.** If you need a specific format, please let us know
  which format you need.

Request help

This request will be sent to accessibility@brighton.ac.uk

Describe your question or issue

Back   Send

10. Log out of studentcentral/My Studies.
11. Close web browser.

On a smartphone or tablet:
4. Press 'Download' to confirm the download of the generated file.
5. Press on download folder icon on the top-right of browser.

6. Press on downloaded file to open in the default app based on format. Note that there are issues with the generated file.
7. App switch to mobile web browser.
8. Press on "A↓" on the right of the document.
9. Press on 'Help'.
10. Write a help report following the instructions. Press Send.
11. Log out of studentcentral/My Studies.
12. Close web browser.

LTA Workshop Guide

A guide to help colleagues run the *Introduction to Blackboard Ally* workshop. Screenshots are included to illustrate each part of the workshop which I designed to run within a module area on My Studies (Blackboard Learn).

Part 1 – Student Experience of Using Ally

- PowerPoint slide provided in the files area of the team: Explain the Teams controls. **Please mention closed captions –** the person using teams should turn on closed captioning at their end it does not help them for us to turn it on.
- Show the teams area, mention the files resources and that key files are pinned at the top, show the final quiz tab.
- In the module area: Start in Student Preview mode with the 'dials' hidden.
- Explain why we are in a module area - Ally's native habitat
- Provide a verbal summary of the agenda
- What is Blackboard Ally? Provide your own read on the text provided.
- Then transport your audience back to thinking about their own modules and the default content typically found in Module Information - including voila, the module handbook.
- Show the action of clicking on the Ally alternative format button (next to the attached file **not the item**) and select the audio version.
- In the audio player on your computer scrub to 10.34 and this will play the bit of the handbook about contacting the service desk (subliminal messaging).
- [Activity] take a minute to look at the alternative formats of files made available in the files area. In addition to Audio and Beeline Reader (pinned at the top) there is also a French translation on the files page (exploratory action).
- Go back to the module and exit student preview mode.
- Go through the formats Sway (helps to make it full screen - esc to leave full screen).
- [Check for questions here]
- Go through benefits and how students will be told.
- [Critical section] 3 things you need to know. Points 1 and three are crucial particularly highlight that staff are **not** being audited. First and foremost, Ally is to provide accessible format options for students, this will happen regardless of any staff actions. Students do **not see the dials!** If the staff don't update/change anything students will still have more options and a better experience than they did before. It is a cross-country ramble (better than a marathon as an analogy - as a marathon is lots of work), **not** a sprint.
- [Check for questions here]

Figure 1 Screenshot of the Module Information Area in the Bb Ally Training module. This is modelled on the stock content found in the University of Brighton module template. A Sway is embedded to explain the Alternative Format Options in Bb Ally.

- In Study Materials: Using the Instructor Feedback Panel.
- Look at the Ally Instructor Feedback dial on the 'class handout' but don't fix anything yet. Talk about a couple of things that Ally has found wrong with the document.
- Use the *what Ally checks document* to explain what Ally is looking for.
- Where should I start. You can also cover when should I start - if you don't have time right now don't worry. These are the kind of fixes that work well in small gaps in the workday.

Run through the scenarios:

- o **Scenario 1:**
  - Show the report for the 'Dublin cinemas...' file.
  - We need to remove this file as it has been added to our reading list, because in the scenario we have worked with our local friendly librarian.
  - To remove - Go to the Module > Files area and then locate the file and delete it with the chevron.
  - Then go back to study materials and you will see a big red message on the item - delete the item

- o **Scenario 2:**
  - Fix the spanner image description.
  - Look at the Ally Instructor feedback dial next to the SCULPT document.
  - Download the doc from this view. You may need to press cmd/ctrl 0 to see the download button due to the viewport sizing in the browser window.
  - In MS Word: Fix one image, and the headings.
  - Save a new version of the document.
  - Upload the new version and celebrate your green dial.

- o **Scenario 3:**
  - Provide a warning that the GIF that has been flagged by Ally could trigger epilepsy, so if sensitive or worried about this, please look away from the screen for 30 secs.
  - Go into the folder. Click on the dial next to the image quickly.
  - Click on the 'remove it' option in Ally.

Study Materials

Build Content ⌄   Assessments ⌄   Tools ⌄   Partner Content ⌄

Part 2: What we are going to cover...

Blackboard

ALLY

Part 1

1. What is Blackboard Ally?
2. How will my students find out about Blackboard Ally?
3. The 3 Things that you need to know about Blackboard Ally

Part 2

1. **Now in Study Materials**
   ○ Using the Instructor Feedback Panel
   ○ What Ally checks
   ○ Where should I start to improve the accessibility of my resources?

2. Typical tasks when using the Ally Instructor Feedback Panel:
   ○ Replace or remove scanned PDFs without machine-readable text (not OCR processed)
   ○ Check and improve the accessibility of existing resources
   ○ Remove or flag a potentially harmful media element with low accessibility
   ○ Creating New Resources? Further reading.

Part 3

1. **Over in Assessment and Marks**
   ○ Final recap quiz and summary

Using the Instructor Feedback Panel

(1) Score shows level of accessibility

(2) View all the file's accessibility issues

(3) Descriptions of the most important accessibility issue

(4) Explains how the issue affects inclusive learning

(5) Detailed steps how to fix the issue

(6) Add your changed in the dialogue box or upload new files

This page at the Blackboard help site provides an overview of the Instructor Feedback Panel and how to use it.

Class handout
Attached Files: SCULPT_example_document.docx (196.078 KB)
This handout explains the principles behind the S.C.U.L.P.T. acronym which stands for Structure, Colour and Contrast, Use of Images, Links or hyperlinks, Plain English and Communication, Tables.

What Ally checks
Attached Files: A_AccessibilityChecklist_BestPractices.pdf (109.723 KB)
This page at the Blackboard help site provides both a basic checklist and a more in-depth list of the elements that Ally checks to assess the accessibility of content. A PDF of the basic checklist is also attached.

Where should I start to improve the accessibility of my resources?
Attached Files: B_BbAlly_where_to_start.pdf (174.794 KB)

(1) Start with resources that have red dials.

Update and replace the following resources first:
- Module handbooks
- Lecture slides or accompanying notes
- Resources which you require all students to read/access, e.g. articles, handouts, scanned content from books

(2) Priority issues that Ally will flag

Issues flagged as 'severe' in Ally which should be resolved to support student use/access.
- Potentially harmful images which can induce seizures (e.g. flashing GIFs)
- PDFs which contain no machine- readable text
- Old file formats which may not open properly or allow accessible file conversion
- Structural issues, such as no headings in a document
- Images without alternative text descriptions

The Ally Indicator Dials
Needs help!
A little better
Almost there
Perfect!

Typical tasks when using the Ally Instructor Feedback Panel
We will work through these together.

Scenario 1: This week's reading
Attached Files: Dublin Cinemas in 1916 The Easter Rising World War One Films and The Growth of the Middle Class Audience.pdf (413.176 KB)
Please read this PDF prior to class.

Scenario 2: Check and improve the accessibility of existing resources
Lets try to fix the S.C.U.L.P.T. handout from before. We also have an image in this item which is missing descriptive text.

Let me tell you about this image...

Class handout
Attached Files: SCULPT_example_document.docx (196.078 KB)
This handout explains the principles behind the S.C.U.L.P.T. acronym which stands for Structure, Colour and Contrast, Use of Images, Links or hyperlinks, Plain English and Communication, Tables.

Scenario 3: A very dangerous image...Remove or flag a potentially harmful media element with low accessibility
This image is so dangerous that I had to hide it in a folder.

Creating new resources? Further reading
Head on over to the Digitally Enabled Learning Resources module for helpful starter templates and advice.

Now onto Assessment and Marks
Part 3 of our workshop will conclude in the Assessment and Marks area of the module.

Figure 2 Screenshot of the Study Materials Area in the Bb Ally Training module. This is where we explain how to review and fix different issues using the Instructor Feedback Panel in Bb Ally.

- In Assessment and Marks: Run through the summary of points shown.
- [Check for questions here]
- Get people back to the Team and the quiz is on the tab.
- Go through the answers from the hidden results channel.
- Remind people about Accessible Document Workshops:
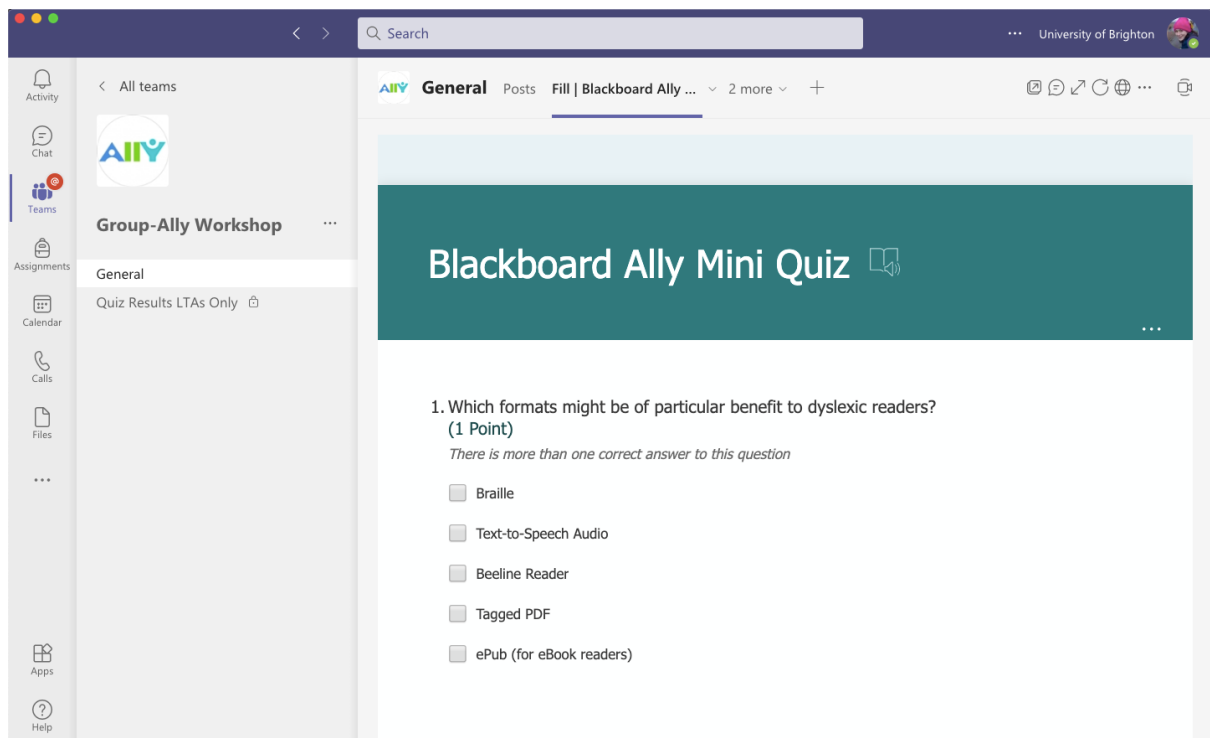 https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/staffdev/Pages/Learning.aspx

Figure 3 At the end of the workshop we return to the Microsoft Team and complete a quiz (Microsoft Form added via a tab). A hidden channel is used to display the results of the quiz in aggregate via screenshare so that no individual is singled out.

Things to reset for each session:

In Study Materials:

- re-upload the original SCULPT document (SCULPT_example_document.docx) which is in the team files LTA only folder. Uploading it to the first item will replace it where it appears again in Scenario 2 as well.
- Re: Upload the 'Dublin Cinemas...' reading - also in the LTA only folder. The item should look like this...
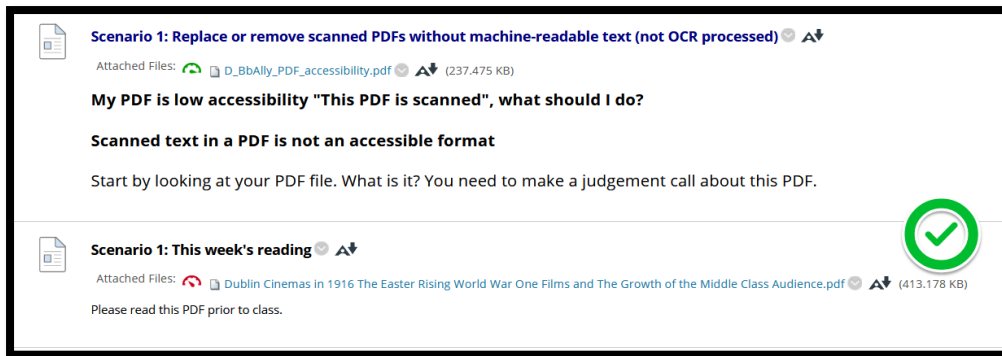
- Remove the alt text from the spanner image - do this in Ally Instructor Panel - there is a bin button to do this.
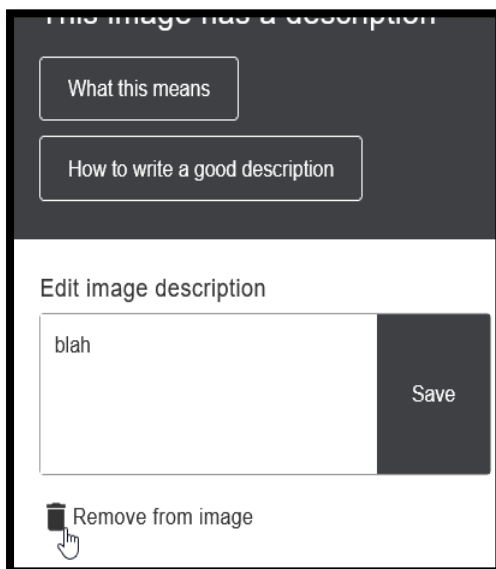
- Go into the Scenario 3 folder and edit the 'Image' item which should still be there. Re-upload and attach the evil GIF which is also in the LTA only folder.
- **The Quiz belongs to Fiona -** so I need to clear out the answers each time. I will try to do this each time I know an Ally session is on the calendar. Please remind me if it isn't done for some reason.

If you would prefer that Fiona resets the module. Please do ask, that is fine.