

Toolkit: Accessible Activity Instructions for Those with Cognitive Disabilities



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Positionality & Background

Program Accessibility is the idea that public entities such as schools, community centers, or any other government agencies are required to make all services, programs, and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes many museums.

The creation of this toolkit came from my own experiences as a disabled person, from my experiences of working with those with cognitive disabilities and seeing there is a lack of accommodations provided in the world of museum education programming.

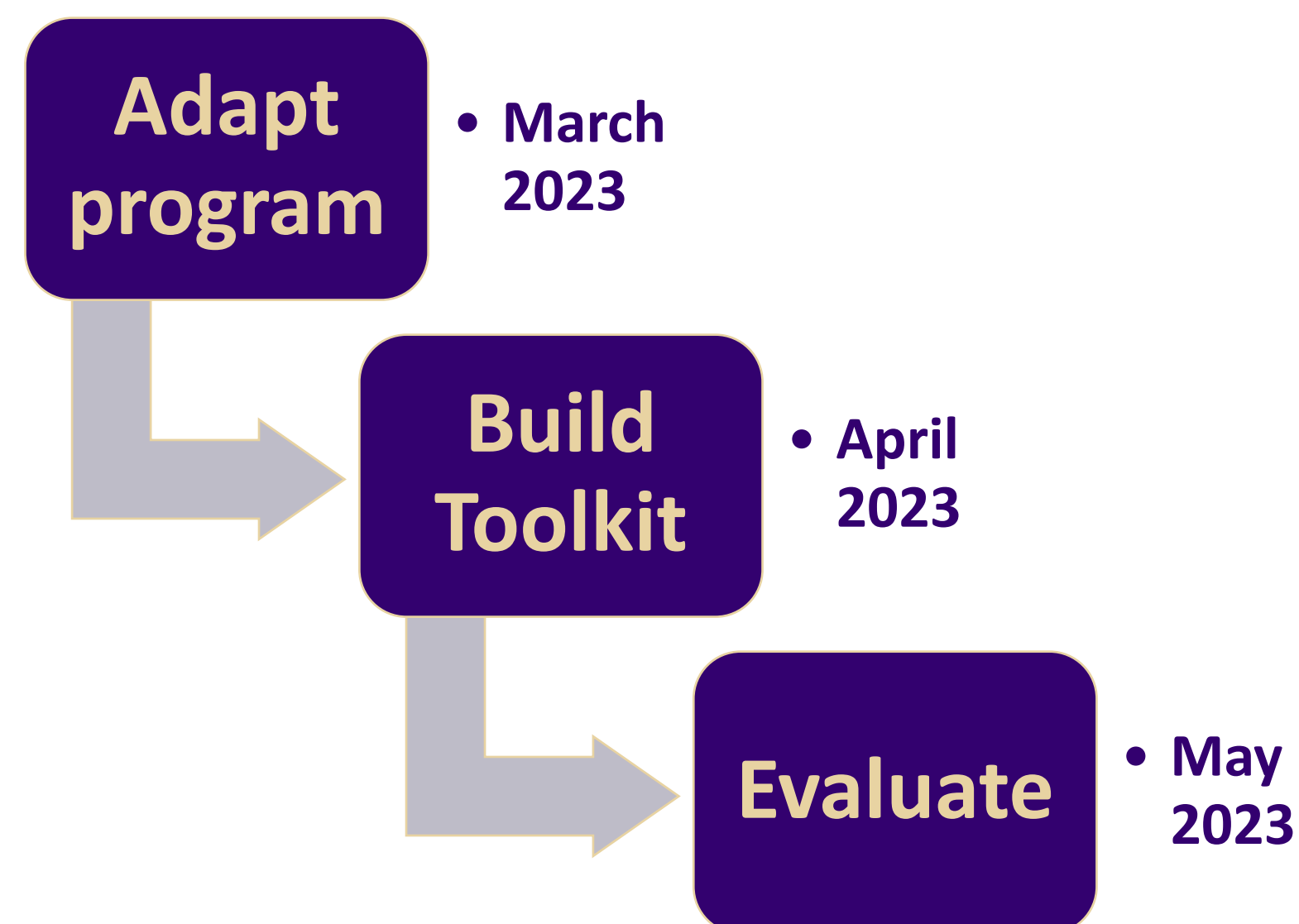
The LeMay-America's Car Museum education department allowed me to adapt their most popular program, the Crash-Test Cars, and use it as an example for creating this toolkit.

Purpose & Desired Impact

The purpose of this project was to develop an accessible toolkit for museum educators to use and guide them when adapting activity or program instructions for those with cognitive disabilities.

The desired impact of this project was to inform museum educators of simple ways to adapt instructions for no additional monetary cost using resources and materials readily available in most museums.

Timeline & Process



March of 2023

- Met with LeMay-America's Car Museum and pick a program to adapt
- Researched best practices in accessibility for those with cognitive disabilities
- Created written instructions for Crash-Test Cars program

April 2023

- Gathered materials needed for hands-on visual instructions
- Took photos of materials
- Created flip-books and hands-on visual instructions
- Started to build toolkit with visuals created and best practices in accessibility

May 2023

- Reached out to Museum Educators of the Puget Sound for evaluation feedback.
- Input feedback given from evaluations into recommendations and next steps in toolkit

Deliverables

The deliverables in this project was an accessible toolkit that included hands on visual aids:



And examples of alternative ways to give adapted instructions such as YouTube videos:



Implications

A small evaluation was conducted with educators from the Puget Sound region:

80% of those surveyed responded that they did not know if their museum already had accommodations for those with cognitive disabilities

100% of those surveyed responded that they had learned something new from the toolkit and would make small changes to move to more accessible programming such as changing fonts used.

Recommendations

Recommendations were based on answers given to the survey question:

“What do you think is the best way for this toolkit to be implemented in a museum setting?”

This toolkit is best suited for smaller education departments or smaller museums because this toolkit can be used as a first step or attempt in accessibility beyond ADA regulations due to limited access to resources.

When using this toolkit, it is best to look at a single program or activity, then work through the toolkit to see what the program or activity already offers and what needs to be improved upon.

References

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