Cognitive Canvas

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QUADS Project Plan 2024-2025

October 27, 2024

Plan Overview

QUADS Compass

QUADS Compass is designed to equip college students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to mentor high school students. It fosters a supportive learning environment that empowers both mentors and mentees. This plan outlines the structure, content, and interactive elements that form the program's foundation, emphasizing self-reflection, relationship-building, and personal growth as core components of effective mentorship.

Instructional Goals

- Create a culturally aware and inclusive mentorship experience that resonates with a diverse range of students.
- Integrate accessibility principles and universal design throughout all elements, ensuring that all participants can fully engage in the learning experience regardless of ability or circumstances.
- Equip mentors with practical skills and resources to build solid and impactful relationships with their mentees, fellow mentors, and local communities.
- Provide engaging content formats and interactive learning activities that adapt to different learning styles.

Accessibility and Universal Design

Accessibility is at the core of QUADS Compass, which is committed to designing content that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards and incorporates principles of Universal Design. This means all videos, interactive elements, and learning materials are designed to be usable, accessible, and beneficial for every learner.

For more information on these principles, refer to the following resources:

- Learn about the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and how they ensure digital accessibility.
- Discover the principles of Universal Design and how they support accessible and inclusive learning environments.

Learning Experience

Content Types

- Video Presentations and Infographics
- Case Studies and Testimonials
- Badges or Leaderboards
- Journals and Self-Reflection
- Peer-to-Peer Discussions
- Capstone Project

Learning Activities

- Discussion Boards (Blackboard or Padlet)
- Quizzes and Knowledge Checks (Blackboard or H5P)
- Interactive Exercises (Blackboard, Padlet, or H5P)
- Peer Feedback (Blackboard or Padlet)
- Video Testimonials and Case Studies

Content Structure

- Ensure inclusivity and representation in all content and case study examples.
- Content is organized into bite-sized modules with a focus on self-paced learning.
- Each module contains an introductory video, readings, and interactive exercises.
- Modules build on each other, starting with foundational concepts like relationship-building and gradually introducing advanced mentoring strategies.
- Each module is divided into smaller segments (5-10 minutes) to keep learners engaged.
- Use visuals, infographics, and short quizzes to break up text-heavy content.
- A capstone project at the end of the course, where mentors design their mentorship strategy.

Tools and Technology

- A device with reliable internet and the ability to record audio and video (e.g., computer, tablet)
- Google Sites with Interactive Widgets (e.g. H5P, Padlet)
- Collaborative Tools (e.g., Google Docs, Google Slides, Padlet)
- Video Hosting Platforms (i.e., YouTube, Vimeo)
- Blackboard Learning Management System
- Accessibility Tools (e.g., color contrast checker, captioning, page scanning)

Brand Application and Content Design

QUADS Branding and Imagery

Brand Colors

- Use brand colors consistently across navigation, buttons, and essential elements.
- Deep Blue (#0A2240) or Bright Blue (#004ABA) for headers and calls-to-action. Gold (#FCB525) for highlights and accents.
- Maintain a minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for text/background combinations (i.e., no yellow text on white backgrounds and vice versa).

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Logos

- For visual clarity, maintain the required clear space around the logo and do not change the logo's stack order.

- Apply a solid-filled version on dark backgrounds to ensure visibility (i.e., an entirely white logo on a dark blue background).

Fonts

- PT Sans Regular and Bold for titles and headings.
- Lato Regular, Italic, and Bold for body copy.
- PT Sans Regular and Italic for numerics.
- Maintain a minimum 16px size for body text.

PT Sans Bold
PT Sans Regular

Title

Lato Bold
Lato Regular
Lato Regular

Body

PT Sans Regular
PT Sans Italics

Numerics

- Ensure fonts remain legible across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.

Images

- Select diverse, authentic photographs representing the QUADS community.
- Include descriptive alt text that conveys image purpose and content.
- Add contextual captions for educational images and diagrams.

Icons

- Use icon styles consistently throughout the design and thoughtfully incorporate the brand color scheme.
- Select simple, universally understood symbols for navigation and actions (i.e., magnifying glass for search, speaker for volume control).
- The size requirements are a minimum of 24x24px for desktop, 44x44px for touch targets, and at least 8px spacing between icons.
- Mark decorative icons appropriately in the code and include accessible labels describing icon function (e.g., aria-labels, alt text).

Language and Tone

- Language should be empathetic, encouraging, and practical.
- Use a friendly tone and simple, easy-to-read language (i.e., target a 9th-grade reading level).
- For unfamiliar words, state the word and immediately define it in context (e.g., "accessibility is the practice of making products, services, and spaces easy for everyone to use").
- When introducing an acronym, provide the full definition first, then refer to the abbreviation (i.e., Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)).
- Avoid using visual indicators (e.g., "to the right" or "the green button") when referring to content.

- When appropriate, use culturally aware language that resonates with diverse backgrounds.
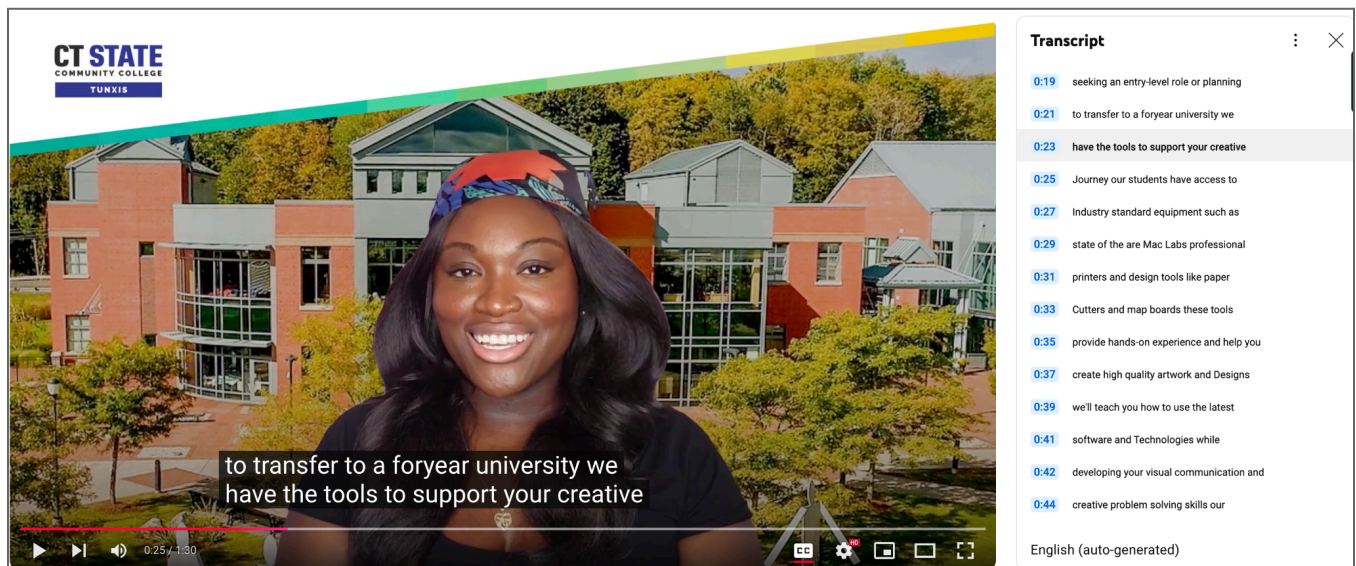
Audio and Video

Audio Guidelines

- Professional voice recording; clean audio without background noise.
- Consistent volume levels across all content and independent volume controls.
- Clear pronunciation and appropriate pacing.
- Complete text transcripts with timestamps and speaker identification.

Video Guidelines

- All audio guidelines apply to videos with sound.
- For videos with minimal or no sound (i.e., a silent movie or instructional animation), use audio descriptions (detailed transcripts that explain sound effects like "crashing" or "booming").
- Professional recording quality with proper lighting and framing.
- Synchronized high-contrast (white text with black outline or black background) closed captions and subtitles.
- Subtitles are only used when another language other than the primary is spoken or displayed on screen (i.e., English speakers looking at a sign in Spanish).
- Keyboard-accessible video controls and do not autoplay video.

* **Always review auto-generated transcripts and captions for potential errors.**

Interactive Elements

General Guidelines

- Make interactive elements visually distinct (i.e., text links are bold and underlined, buttons are blue squares with white text and an icon).
- Ensure keyboard navigation, logical tab order, and screen reader support.
- Provide hover and focus states using brand colors and ensure enough contrast. However, do not solely rely on color to identify interactive elements (combine shape, color, font weight, etc.).
- Ensure mobile responsiveness.

Navigation

- Ensure links are visually distinguishable (i.e., underlined or bold and underlined).
- Use descriptive link text in context within the content (i.e., "Learn more about our sponsors" rather than "Click here").
- Clear, consistent menus with current location indicators (i.e., the menu is always at the top of the page, and the current page is underlined in the menu).
- Breadcrumb navigation for deeply nested content (i.e., "Home > About > Our Sponsors").
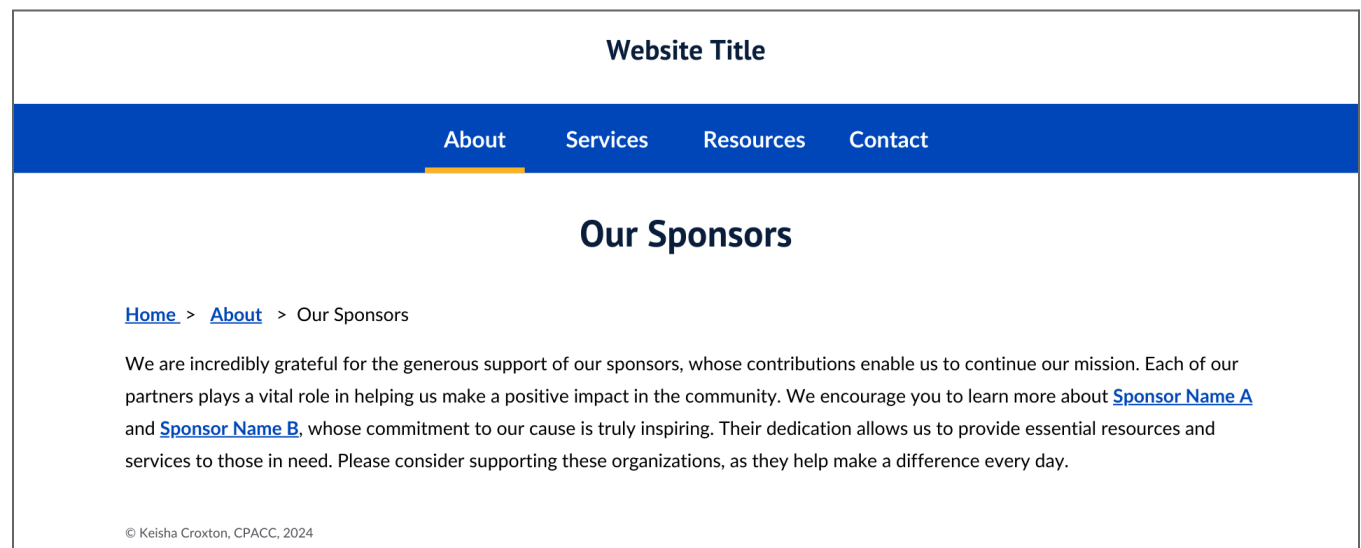
Interactive Controls

- Back/forward navigation and ability to play/pause moving content.

- Progress indicators for long sections, forms, or processes extend multiple screens.

- Save/resume functionality and easy exit points.

- Provide the ability for the user to extend the time for timed sessions.

- Allow users multiple attempts to correct or fix inputs.
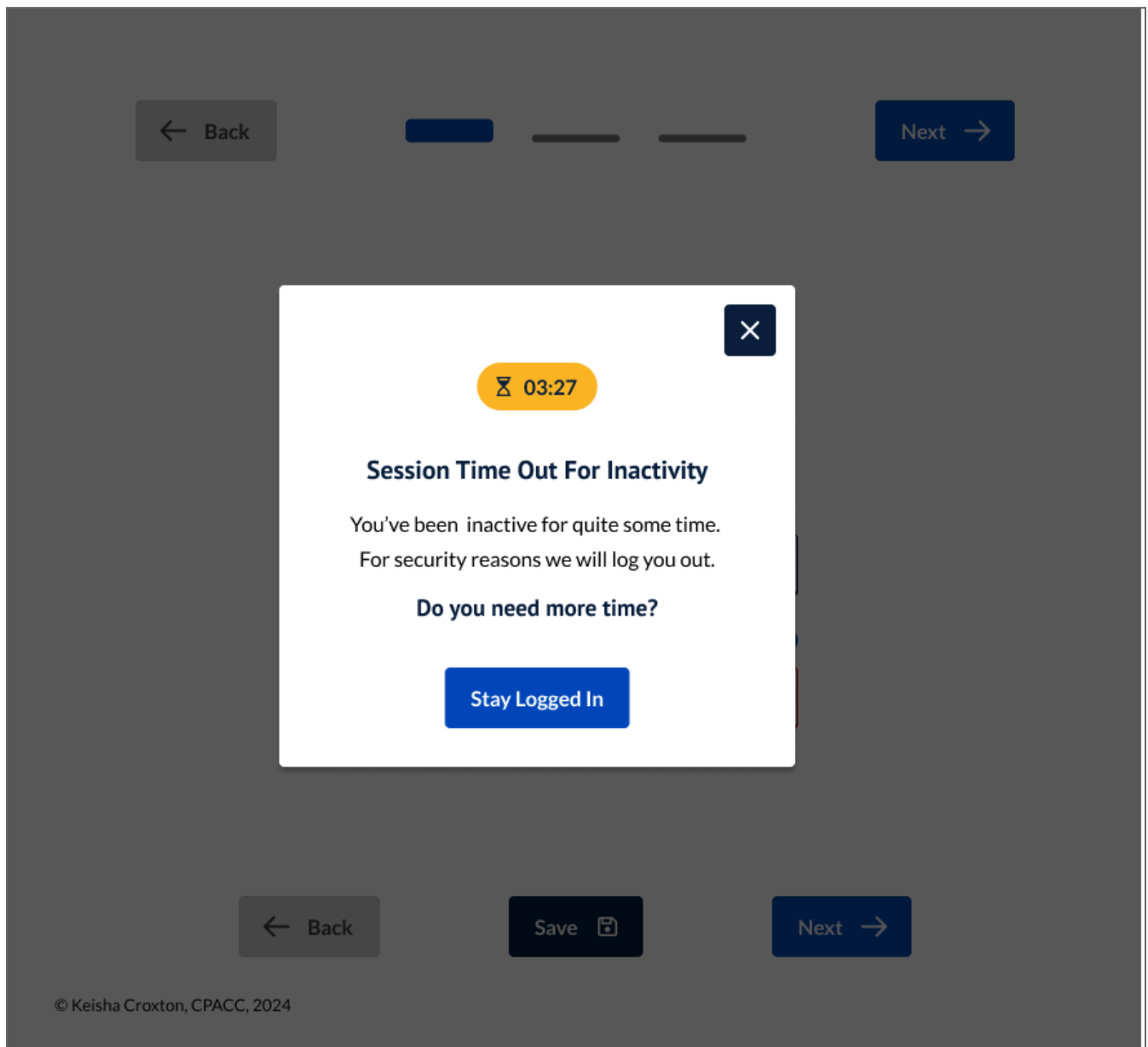
User Input Elements

- Ensure buttons have clear action labels (e.g., "Download our Handbook" or "Submit Application").
- Form fields must be labeled with visible boundaries and grouped in logical order.
- Include error messages, success confirmations, automatic validation, and submission confirmations for user actions.
- Include clear feedback for user actions (i.e., if a person's password doesn't meet the requirements, indicate that and explain what needs to be fixed to proceed).

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