Quick Guide to
Universal Design for Learning

Practical Tips for Implementing UDL in the Higher Education Classroom

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)* is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. It is an optimal way to engage all of your students in your class. Below are ways that you can begin to implement Universal Design in your classes.

Provide Multiple Means of Engagement:

- Align class content/assignments with course objectives (highlight the objective that you are working on). An easy way to do this is to use a rubric or assignment handout including the objective
- Instructor should be easily accessible to the students and share how you prefer to be contacted
- Offer practical, real-world experiences and examples that take student diversity into account
- Make expectations explicit. Be sure to go over rubrics and scoring guides. It can be helpful to write into the rubric that students must post to a board after reading through
- Offer notes and summaries of class content. Use optional discussion boards where students can post notes to share allowing them to take notes and see how others work. Share PowerPoints so that students can print them and use them for note-taking
- Use frequent assessments - both formal and informal

Provide Multiple Means of Representation:

- Create course outcomes and assessments that address various learner preferences
- Highlight critical or key information - Some students can't always discern key points so highlight them in multiple ways: color, contrast, font
- Include transcripts of visual/audio and slide presentations
- Provide lectures or content in multiple formats - video, podcasts, presentation, essay, drawings
- Use accessible technology - captions, transcripts

Provide Multiple Means of Action & Expression:

- Ensure your documents and content meet accessibility standards (see OTL faculty guides for details)
- Clarify assignment expectations - review rubrics, review assignments, practice exam-style questions
- Offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skills - look at your learning objectives and offer multiple means of assessment - e.g. for reflections - create a twitter feed, illustrate content for an audience, write an essay, make a video (maybe not appropriate for all assignments, but where possible, mix it up - if appropriate, you can give a choice of 2 or 3 methods they can choose from)
- Provide students with options for responding e.g. online discussion, in-class contribution, polls
- Provide feedback - explicit, directly related to the rubric, provided in different ways - written, audio, examples of what you are talking about
- Provide opportunities to practice with feedback along the way - e.g.. a 30-page paper can be broken into multiple assignments: Find resources, do a literature review, make an outline

** These tips were provided by Ruby Owiny and Marla Lohmann at UDI Digicon Oct 2019.* **Click here for Full Guide.**