

Inclusive & Equitable Teaching Online: Designing for All Learners

Inclusive and equitable teaching means that we need to design our online courses to meet the diverse ways in which our students learn. We can do this by designing for accessibility, and by incorporating guidelines of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). All learning begins with access! Accessible design and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) both aim to make content in a learning environment usable and available for the widest range of students across all abilities. By creating accessible courses and following UDL guidelines, we can address learner variability as an intentional part of our course design. Just as all students learn differently, the best chance for student success results from flexible instruction that utilizes all modalities. Students can learn in ways best for them, when online courses are accessible and follow UDL guidelines.

This issue of our Summer newsletter series expands on what we've already discussed about inclusive and equitable teaching online: Getting started; supporting our online students; and making learning relevant and meaningful. Here we will share practices for how to make online learning environments accessible and usable to all students. We also will direct you to Mason resources for accessibility, including the Assistive Technology Initiative, and Ally tool in Blackboard.

WHAT ARE UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL) GUIDELINES?

1 MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT



Students differ in how they can be engaged or motivated to learn online. No one means of engagement will be optimal for all learners in all contexts; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.

2 MULTIPLE MEANS OF REPRESENTATION

Students differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information. No one means of representation will be optimal for all learners; providing options for representation is essential.



3 MULTIPLE MEANS OF ACTION & EXPRESSION



Students differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. No one means of action and expression will be optimal for all learners; providing options for action and expression is essential.

[Use this link to view the infographic online](#)

Learn More about: [Blackboard Accessibility](#) | [Assistive Technology Initiative \(ATI\)](#)

Apply UDL Guidelines & Accessibility to Your Online Course

The [Center for Applied Special Technology](#) (CAST) has developed [three basic guidelines](#), based on scientific research about how humans learn. The guidelines ensure that all students can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities through: (a) [Multiple Means of Engagement](#); (b) [Multiple Means of Representation](#); and (c) [Multiple Means of Action & Expression](#). In the table below, we share a few examples of practices for how you may apply UDL guidelines and accessibility to your online course.

| UDL Guideline | How to Do This in Your Online Course? |
|---|---|
| <p>Guideline 1: Provide learners with Multiple Means of Engagement</p> <p>(The “Why” of Learning)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students by optimizing relevance, value and authenticity. Allow students to meet learning outcomes and to personalize an assignment, with choices such as completing a paper, making a video, delivering a presentation, or creating an infographic. Keep students engaged and focused through clear and consistent Blackboard course organization, predictable structure, and easy navigation. |
| <p>Guideline 2: Provide learners with Multiple Means of Representation</p> <p>(The “What” of Learning)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present content in multiple ways that are each designed in an accessible manner. Explain an important concept in your course through a combination of text, video, audio, and/or images. Provide captions and written transcripts for all videos or auditory clips posted in your course. Use Blackboard Ally to make sure that all images and documents you post in your course are accessible. Ally then provides students with different alternative formats (e.g., electronic braille, PDFs, audio/MP3, etc.) that best support their specific learning needs. For help with accessibility and with Blackboard Ally, contact Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI). |
| <p>Guideline 3: Provide learners with Multiple Means of Action & Expression</p> <p>(The “How” of Learning)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned. Instead of traditional tests and assessments, consider alternatives for demonstrating knowledge (e.g., group work, videos, demonstrations, portfolios, research papers, and presentations). |

[Learn More Examples of Practices for Designing for All Learners](#)
[Click to Download Planning Worksheet](#)

Contact Us!

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