

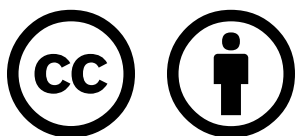
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) 2nd Edition

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) 2nd Edition

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About This Guide

Navigating This Guide

There are two ways to navigate through the content:

1. Click the **Contents** menu to navigate between modules and chapters
2. Use the **Previous/Next** links in the footer at the very bottom of the screen to go back and forth through the content

For additional information on how to navigate through this guide, click the plus buttons on the interactive image below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

Overview

The intention of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL): An Online Post-Secondary Educator Guide for Supporting Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) or UDL for IDEA is to curate, develop and deliver UDL resources for technology mediated learning environments in support of access and inclusion in higher education in Ontario. This guide has been developed to be used as a complete course of 6 modules or as individual modules, as your context requires. The 6 modules are as follows:

1. Introduction and Overview of UDL
2. UDL in Post-Secondary and Technology Enabled Learning Environments
3. Legislative Requirements under the AODA and OHRC
4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
5. Indigenous Pedagogies and the Benefits for All Learners in Ontario
6. UDL for AODA, EDI and Indigenous Pedagogies in Post-Secondary Learning Environments

Format

The UDL for IDEA Guide is designed for flexible use so that institutions can use it as a set of self-paced, unfacilitated modules that include exercises for self-reflection and AODA and EDI goal setting, or as a facilitated learning experience led locally at an institution. If institutions are going to use it as a Microcredential, we recommend you adopt the facilitated format.

Facilitated Format

You will see time estimates indicated at the start of each module. These estimates are for participants to work through the module content and complete the learning activities in an unfacilitated format (see below). If you are completing this program or individual modules with a facilitator, they will advise you on the length of time.

Throughout the modules, you will encounter “Pause and Reflect” questions. When navigating the modules in the facilitated format, use these questions to engage in discussion. Time commitments for modules may differ from those indicated when modules are completed with a facilitator.

Unfacilitated Format

In the unfacilitated format, use the reflection questions on your own to make connections between the module content and your own instructional context. You are welcome to complete the reflective portions of the modules in whatever way is best for you (e.g., write notes, dictate audio files, draw reflections, etc.). If participants are completing this module without a facilitator, it will take approximately 1.5-2 hours to work through the content, learning activities and assessments.

Tips

Whether you are completing the entire guide, or individual modules, here are some course navigation tips:

- Start at the beginning of the module you wish to complete and work your way through the content, learning activities and assessments. The content has been designed and developed to scaffold learning for participants and build on both new and prior knowledge.
- You can navigate back and forth through each module, so if you miss content, or wish to review a resource again, feel free.
- Each module includes interactive learning activities and a culminating assessment. Some of these activities and assessments will be completed within the module, while others will be reflective and used for discussion or your own planning. You are welcome to complete the reflective portions of the modules in whatever way is best for you. None of the learning activities or assessments are timed.
- Modules include a section of resources to deepen learning should you wish to learn more about a particular topic touched on in the content.

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Land Acknowledgement

The UDL for IDEA VLS Team acknowledges that its work, and the work of its collaborating Colleges and Universities, takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province. We acknowledge that there are [46 treaties and other agreements](#) that cover the territory on Turtle Island now called Ontario. We are thankful to be able to work, live, learn, and teach in these territories and recognize current and historical Indigenous presence and land rights.

Within this guide, we endeavour to increase awareness, understanding, and application of Indigenous pedagogies in Ontario post-secondary education, while undoing Indigenous erasure in our everyday lives. We hope that by creating and distributing this resource we take a step toward dismantling the continued impact of colonization, biased curricula and unjust educational practices in Ontario, that more Indigenous learners see themselves in post-secondary curricula, and that racialized learners experience more success within their program as a result.

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Accessibility Statement

We developed the *UDL for IDEA Guide* with a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners.

The accessibility of foundational resource was assessed by the Centre for Extended Learning, University of Waterloo. This review was based on the WCAG 2.0 Guidelines at success criteria Level AA. The authors have addressed all known accessibility issues to the best of their abilities.

The following known accessibility issues persist and may cause difficulties for some persons with disabilities:

- **Previous** and **Next** page buttons are difficult to find and the use of orange text over a dark blue background is not optimal.
- Not all videos (for example, those on public sites) have transcripts.

In addition to the web version, this guide is available in a number of file formats including PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), and various editable files. [Here is a link to where you can download this book in another file format](#). Look for the “Download this book” drop-down menu to select the file type you want.

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Preface

The UDL for IDEA Guide is a dynamic and flexible credential designed for post-secondary educators with modules and elements that can be repurposed for use in multiple contexts (e.g., student learning, administration training, etc.). The content models UDL principles, embeds accessibility elements and strives to decolonise the curriculum design and delivery with the goal of meeting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) objectives, as well as Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements.

The guide aims to:

- Identify, curate, and where gaps are identified, develop scholarly UDL resources to inform the pedagogical practices of post-secondary educators, to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and attainment of EDI goals.
- Design and deliver a flexible and adaptable online learning experience that supports the access and inclusion focused needs of all Ontario post-secondary educators.
- Begin the process of changing behaviour and beliefs about accessibility and the purpose and practicalities of using UDL as a design framework in post-secondary education.
- Establish an adaptable pedagogical and technical framework for a Microcredential that can be adapted to the local context of individual institutions.

Learning Outcomes

Post-secondary educators who participate in the entire UDL for IDEA project should be able to:

- Define how to apply UDL guidelines in the design, development, and delivery of post-secondary curriculum
- Determine the relationship between UDL, AODA, and EDI
- Determine their goals and objectives in course design, development, and delivery to meet AODA and EDI requirements
- Recognise and begin to plan for incorporating Indigenous pedagogies into post-secondary curricula
- Plan to implement UDL principles in their pedagogies to meet AODA and EDI goals, within post-secondary learning environments

Intersectionalities

Why Universal Design for Learning

In the 1980s, architect Ronald Mace introduced the term Universal Design (UD). In its original

application, UD refers to “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Connell et al., 1997).

The concept of removing barriers and increasing access has been applied to the field of education with the development of various UD frameworks, including Universal Instructional Design (UID), Universal Design for Instruction (UDI), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In the digital environment, UD has been described as Inclusive Design, which is defined as “design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference” (Inclusive Design Research Centre, n.d.). While there are some differences in the origin and context of Inclusive Design and UD, as well as differences between the UD Frameworks, there are common goals:

- Inclusivity
- Recognizing and designing for diversity

While the goal of each of the frameworks mentioned is inclusion, we have decided to focus our modules on the UDL Guidelines because:

- UDL is the only UD framework that is based on research on cognitive neuroscience of learning (Rose, Meyer, et al. 2002; Rose, Rouhani, et al., 2013; Rose, 2016).
- The UDL Guidelines address aspects of inclusion such as equity, diversity, and decolonization.
- While UDL addresses accessibility, inclusion and equity, it also has a distinct focus on the development of masterful learners, which is at the heart of postsecondary education (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014).
- UDL is recommended by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, including in their [Improving the Accessibility of Remote Higher Education: Lessons from the pandemic and recommendations](#) research study.
- A significant number of Ontario postsecondary institutions have already included UDL implementation as a prominent element in their strategic mandate agreements ([College and University Strategic Mandate Agreements](#)).
- UDL has been included in the province’s [AODA: Development of proposed postsecondary education standards – 2021 initial recommendations report](#).

The CAST (2018) video, *UDL to Change the World [1:03]*, explains more about why UDL was chosen for this project and how this framework is important for AODA and EDI goals.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=21#oembed-1>

Focus on AODA

This guide is firmly rooted in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) as it applies in the post-secondary context. As such, it may be used as part of mandatory training in post-secondary settings.

Indigenous Pedagogies and Decolonization

We recognize the presence of racist practices and processes that have posed barriers for students who identify as members of racialized groups. These barriers can mean that students do not enter post-

secondary education, or do not complete their post-secondary program. This bias is found in the design and delivery of post-secondary education and in the scholarships of teaching and learning.

It is important to address these issues/racism and colonization of the curriculum because eliminating biased curriculum and unjust educational practices is part of providing equal access. When Indigenous learners can see themselves in the curriculum, they are more likely to be successful (Tunison, 2007) and more likely to experience success within their program (Indspire, 2018). Educating all learners, regardless of their background, contributes to graduates who are aware of the social injustices.

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

– [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#), 2015

The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including:

a. any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and

b. any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claim agreements or may be so acquired.

– The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ([Section 25 – Aboriginal and treaty rights](#))

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Glossary

Throughout the modules, you will see common terms, abbreviations, and acronyms. The glossary below defines how these terms are used in this context.

AODA

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

OHRC

Ontario Human Rights Code

EDI

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Educator/Instructor/Faculty

Terms used interchangeably throughout these modules to indicate the role of an individual with subject matter expertise sharing that content with a learner/student.

Education Provider

Refers to an organization that provides education, either as a main or ancillary objective. This includes public educational institutions as well as private enterprise, non-governmental organizations or non-educational public bodies (UNESCO, 2011).

Equity

Equity is described as fairness, sameness, and appreciating diversity and inclusion.

Diversity

Diversity is often perceived to be about points of view, representation, and supporting inclusion.

Decolonization

“The process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches.” (Antoine et al, 2018)

Inclusion

Inclusion is about creating environments open to feedback, supporting diversity, and being transparent and flexible.

Indigenous Epistemologies

Theory of knowledge that is based on Indigenous perspectives, such as relationality and the interconnection of sacred and secular, and holism. The emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical dimensions of knowledge are common in Indigenous epistemologies (Antoine et al., 2018).

Indigenous Pedagogies

The method and practices of teaching that focus on the development of a human being as a whole person, learning through experience, and recognizing the important role that Elders have in passing on wisdom and knowledge (Antoine et al., 2018).

Learner/Student

Terms used interchangeably throughout these modules to indicate the role of an individual actively engaged in the learning process and gaining knowledge/content from an educator/instructor/faculty

UDL

Universal Design for Learning

References

Antoine, A., Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S., & Rodriguez de France, C. (2018). Pulling together: A guide for curriculum developers. BCcampus. <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers>

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Contributors

The UDL for IDEA Guide has been a collaborative effort between 10 post-secondary institutions in Ontario from both the University and College sectors committed to the project.

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1.1: Origins of UDL

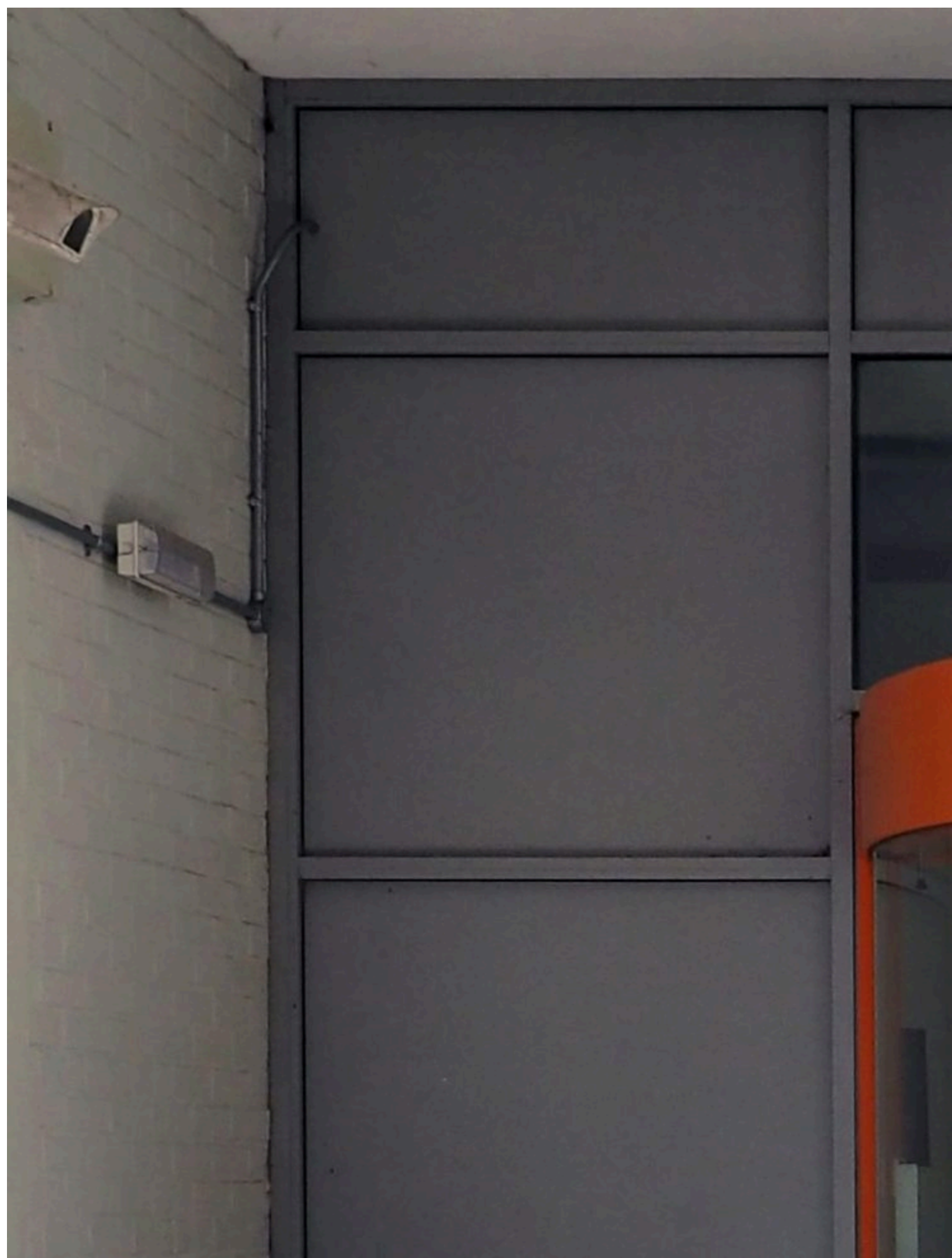
Concept of Universal Design

In the 1980s, architect Ronald Mace introduced the term Universal Design (UD). In its original application, UD refers to “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Connell et al., 1997). For example, consider the barriers presented by entering a building that has steps up to a door with handles. Who would have difficulty accessing such a building?



(rvaphotodude, 2006)

Now consider a building entrance that is at ground-level entry with doors that open automatically. Who would have difficulty navigating this building?



(chrisinplymouth, 2017)

Just as stairs pose barriers in the built environment, there are barriers to learning in education. The concept of removing barriers and increasing access has been applied to the field of education with the development of various UD frameworks, including Universal Instructional Design (UID), Universal Design for Instruction (UDI), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Despite their differences, inclusive instruction is the common goal of all three of these frameworks. The ultimate goal of inclusive instruction is to remove unnecessary barriers and improve access for all learners.

Universal Design for Learning

In the 1900s, David Rose, Anne Meyer, and their colleagues at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) developed the [UDL framework](#), which is the only UD framework that is based on research on cognitive neuroscience (Meyer, et al. 2002; Rose, Rouhani, et al., 2013; Rose, 2016). CAST is an organization whose mission is to eliminate barriers to learning and support the development of expert learners while addressing aspects of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

Inclusion

Divers

Universal
for Lear

(UDL for IDEA VLS Team)

A key aspect of UDL is understanding that all learners are variable and that the “average student” simply does not exist. We cannot plan for every learner variable, but we can design, develop, and deliver our curriculum knowing our learners will have diverse needs and providing them options to ensure everyone’s needs are met.

Todd Rose explains that when organizations plan for the “average” they are not, in fact, planning to meet anyone’s needs. Education can struggle with this concept; as educators, we often design curriculum for “average” post-secondary students. Instead, if we plan to support learners at the margins, we go a long way to creating more equitable, accessible, and inclusive learning environments for all diverse student populations. Watch Todd’s video to fully appreciate the need to rid ourselves of the idea of “average”.

The TEDx (2013) video, *The Myth of the Average: Todd Rose at TEDx Sonoma County* [18:26], explains why we should rid ourselves of the idea of the “average”.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=30#oembed-1>

Once we accept that there is no average, we can start to find teaching and learning strategies to support all of our students. The UDL guidelines provide the strategies we need and offer a path for curriculum design, development and delivery that embeds equity, diversity, access and inclusion.

Activity 1: Define UDL

Define UDL as you understand it within your context. If UDL is new to you, what does the phrase “Universal Design for Learning” invoke for you? If you already use UDL principles, how do you define them in your teaching and/or learning?

You are invited to record your definition in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don’t lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=30#h5p-2>

References

chrisinplymouth (Photographer). (2017). Automatic door [Photograph]. Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/Xmqa6m>. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

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rvaphotodude (Photographer). (2006). Thomas Jefferson High School – Entrance [Photograph]. Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/4oQL9q>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

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1.2: UDL Guidelines

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a curriculum design, development, and delivery framework used to create equitable, inclusive, and accessible learning environments. UDL assumes all learning environments are diverse and that all learners have variable learning needs. UDL works to provide learning spaces (both physical and virtual) where all students can effectively learn, and demonstrate their learning while advancing learner agency and supporting learners to be “purposeful and reflective, resourceful and authentic, strategic and action-oriented” (CAST, 2024).

Networks

UDL guidelines are based on the three primary brain networks shown in the slides below:

- Affective networks – The “why” of learning
- Recognition networks – The “what” of learning
- Strategic networks – The “how” of learning

This slide show describes key facts about the brain from a UDL perspective. To advance to the next slide, click the blue progress bar at the bottom of the image or the small arrow next to the 1/3 text.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=37#h5p-3>

(CAST, 2018)

Creating learning experiences that activate these three broad learning networks is a useful pursuit for educators as it works towards the goal of expert learning. In addition, the UDL framework reminds us that all brains are variable and that monolithic “learning styles” do not actually exist. Instead, we know that each brain is processing information in complex and variable interactions between the various networks of the brain.

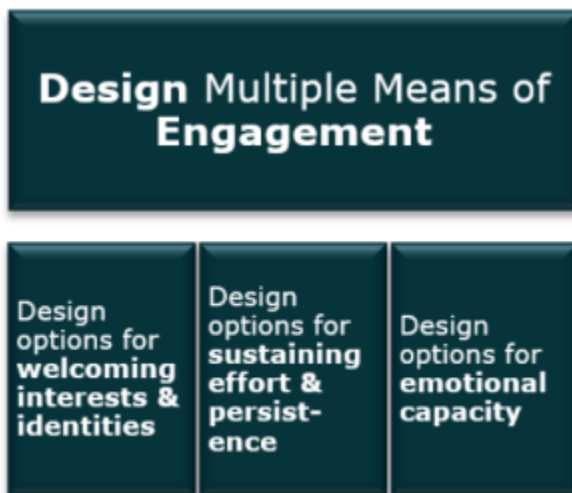
Principles

CAST has identified a series of principles to guide design, development, and delivery in practice to address each of the different networks:

- Multiple means of **engagement**
- Multiple means of **representation**
- Multiple means of **action** and **expression**

Considerations

Each network contains considerations (three for each network making nine in total) that emphasize learner diversity that could either present barriers to, or opportunities for, learning. The considerations for each network are as follows:



- **Design Multiple Means of Engagement**
 - Design options for welcoming interests & identities
 - Design options for sustaining effort & persistence
 - Design options for emotional capacity

Design Multiple Means of Representation

Design options for perception

Design options for language & symbols

Design options for building knowledge

- **Design Multiple Means of Representation**
 - Design options for perception
 - Design options for language & symbols
 - Design options for building knowledge

Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression

Design options for interaction

Design options for expression & communication

Design options for strategy development

- **Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression**
 - Design options for interaction
 - Design options for expression & communication
 - Design options for strategy development

The guidelines are not prescriptive, but instead offer informed suggestions that can be used in any program, course or learning environment to support masterful learning and accurate assessment. Some post-secondary institutions use a streamlined version of the UDL framework to provide more flexibility for application (as shown below).

UDL G

Affective Networks

Recogniti

The **why** of learning

The **wha**

Design Multiple Means of Engagement

**Design Mu
Repres**

Design options for **welcoming interests & identities**

Design options for **sustaining effort & persistence**

Design options for **emotional capacity**

Design options for **perception**

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opti
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The video, *What is UDL?* [3:34] by Mohawk College (2025), explains how all of the UDL components work together.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=37>

[Transcript of What is UDL? \(PDF\)](#) ↓

The UDL Guidelines (CAST)

Some UDL implementers prefer to use a PDF version of the [UDL Guidelines](#) ↓ from CAST that offer additional elements for each checkpoint. To learn more about the UDL Guidelines from CAST, consider reviewing the interactive version and accompanying resources on [The UDL Guidelines](#) ↗ website. The UDL Guidelines are consistently informed by user feedback and ongoing research, meaning the guidelines used in UDL for IDEA have been revised a number of times.

Activity 2: Reflect

Please reflect on and respond to one of the three questions below:

- At this point, are there specific topics related to UDL that you would like to learn more about?
- Is it possible to design a learning environment that works for all learners?
- What is one thing you realize you have done in your past teaching that would not fit the UDL Guidelines?

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=37#h5p-2>

References

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Mohawk College. (2025). *UDL with CTLI* [Video]. Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation. <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/centre-for-teaching-learning-innovation/teaching-resources/universal-design-for-learning#universal-design-for-learning>

Mohawk College. (2025). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines* [Infographic]. <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/centre-for-teaching-learning-innovation/teaching-resources/universal-design-for-learning#universal-design-for-learning>

1.3: Examples of UDL

We have offered a couple of examples of Universal Design (UD) in the previous topic of this module, but what does UDL look like? The following are some general examples organized by the UDL Guideline principles (Mohawk College, 2025).

You may find it helpful to see what UDL can look like based on your teaching and learning space. Here are some examples of UDL in a variety of learning environments:

Examples of Designing for Multiple Means of Engagement

- Using a variety of assessment methods
- Offering choice of assignment topic.
- Chunking large modules into smaller segments.
- Providing opportunities for reflection.

Examples of Designing for Multiple Means of Representation

- Offering a course glossary.
- Creating accessible and uncluttered course materials.
- Providing note taking support.
- Including additional time for quizzes/tests/exams.

Examples of Designing for Multiple Means of Action & Expression

- Allowing students to work individually, in pairs or in groups.
- Inviting learners to develop and share their learning goals.
- Following a clear and concise learning plan.
- Offering due date reminders.

Multiple Means of Engagement

Using a variety of assessment methods.

Offering choice of assignment topic.

Chunking large modules into

Traditional Learning Spaces



(teddy-rised, 2008)

There are many names for what we are calling “traditional” learning spaces; you may refer to these learning environments as face-to-face, in-person, or in-class. Whatever label works for you, the examples below outline what UDL can look like when your learners are physically present in a defined classroom space and content is being delivered synchronously:

- Provide opportunities for learners to move in the classroom space to form groups or pairs to complete learning activities
- Make time throughout the class/session to stop and have learners reflect
- Give options for how learners can ask questions, which may include raising hands, using a backchannel or submitting written questions
- Offer assessments that provide time and space for prompt feedback (from the educator or peers) within the lesson

Online Learning Environments



For the purposes of this module, “online” learning environments are defined as content delivered and assessed (as required), fully technology-enabled and without any traditional learning space elements. The examples below outline what UDL can look like in these online learning environments where content may be being delivered synchronously and/or asynchronously:

- Provide opportunities to review content asynchronously
- Offer options for learning participation, which may include using chat functions, discussing topics through the learning management system, and asking questions on screen
- Develop interactive learning activities such as polls, check-in questions, discussion topics for breakout rooms
- Proactively include additional time and/or attempts on assessments for all learners

Blended or Technology-Mediated Learning



(Mörtsell, 2017)

Blended or technology-mediated learning spaces are, for the purposes of this module, defined as a combination of traditional and online learning environments where content may be delivered synchronously and/or asynchronously. The examples below outline how UDL can be implemented in these teaching and learning environments:

- Offer multimedia resources online that solidify concepts taught in the traditional class environment

- Include clear navigation instructions so learners can manage both learning spaces
- Suggest communication options for in-person and online
- Provide assessment opportunities that take place in the “traditional” learning space, as well as online to ensure a variety of not only assessment methods, but also environments

You will notice that many of these examples can be adapted to any teaching and learning environment. You will also notice that UDL does not need to be large-scale projects or require you to dismantle a course. UDL can be small changes over time, offering more options when and where you can, reflecting on the impact of those changes, and continuously improving your teaching and your students’ learning. The end result will be a more inclusive, equitable and accessible learning space for all of your learners.

Activity 3: Minimizing Barriers to Hyflex Learning

“Hybrid flexible” or hyflex is defined as a course design and delivery approach that “combines face-to-face (F2F) and online learning”, with “Each class session and learning activity...offered in-person, synchronously online, and asynchronously online” HyFlex allows the learner to determine how to participate given students flexibility and the capacity to engage with the course content regardless of location or time (EDUCAUSE, 2020).

Imagine you are teaching a hyflex course, how will you apply UDL principles to minimize the following barriers?

- Engagement: Online students are missing the social component of in-person learning
- Representation: Only using a PowerPoint to present new information
- Action & Expression: Only multiple choice and written response to assess students’ learning

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don’t lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=43#h5p-2>

References

Benton Kearney, D. (2024). *Examples of Universal Design for Learning* [Infographic]. Mohawk College, Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation. <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/centre-for-teaching-learning-innovation/teaching-resources/universal-design-for-learning#universal-design-for-educators>

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Mörtsell, S. (2017). Netha and Video call Sweden India edit-a-thon [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=56800623>. CC BY-SA 4.0.

teddy-rised (Photographer). (2008). That Huge Lecture Theatre! [Photograph]. Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/5hJ8dN>. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

1.4: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: Refine Your Definition

Using your definition from the beginning of this module, refine your definition of UDL for your context. It may be helpful for your revised definition to include audience, environment, purpose and specific applications as they apply to your work.

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=45#h5p-2>

Further Learning

The following are some resources to deepen your learning about UDL and its implementation:

- The Centre for Applied Special Technology (CAST) is the conceptual home of UDL. The [About Universal Design for Learning](#) website offers a wealth of resources for both the new and seasoned UDL implementer.
- The [ThinkUDL podcast](#) discusses the implementation of UDL in higher education with educators who are designing and developing their curriculum with learner variability as their focus. The examples are relevant, and the discussion is always interesting.
- A portion of the UDL with CTL video was included earlier in the module. You are welcome to access the entire video on Mohawk College's [Universal Design for Learning](#) webpage.

2.1: Applying UDL in the Design Phase



Including UDL elements as the first step in curriculum, course and/or program development is ideal. Think about the UD example offered in Module 1 – Introduction and Overview of UDL: retrofitting accessibility and inclusion takes more work, time and effort (e.g., removing existing stairs to replace it with a ramp takes time, additional funds and effort). Instead, we can consider the needs of our learners, and ourselves as educators, and design our course with inclusion, equity, diversity, and access in mind.

Things to Consider

When thinking about your course or curriculum design, or re-design, consider:

- Designing curricular materials that are concise, accessible and explicit
- Ensuring learning expectations which include:
 - Learning outcomes and/or learning goals
 - A plan for learning with clear due dates, if required
 - Course/program/learning environment navigation instructions
 - Detailed assignment outlines and/or learning activity instructions
- Creating online learning environments that have:
 - Intuitive layouts
 - Access to key content, course documents, policies and processes in a variety of locations
 - Communication options
 - Tools to support accessibility
- Incorporating a variety of assessment methods and/or offering options for learners to demonstrate their knowledge
- Including space for easy retrieval of grades and/or feedback
- Reflecting on the appropriate cognitive load based on learning outcomes and goals
- Selecting technology that best supports learning outcomes/goals, learning activities and assessments

The following video, *UDL, Technology and Materials* [1:18] by UDL on Campus (2015), quickly touches on the use of technology when implementing UDL in the higher education learning environment.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=51#oembed-1>

What Educators Say

In *UDL at Mohawk College* [2:43], Tara Dinyer, Professor in the Health, Wellness and Fitness Program, describes her UDL implementation process and provides examples of some of the UDL elements she has embedded into her courses.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=51>

Activity 2: Test Your Knowledge

Now that you're familiar with UDL implementation in the design phase, let's test your knowledge! Link the UDL practice to the correct consideration in the following 5 question quiz. To complete the quiz, choose the correct response, click the "check" button to check your answer, then use the blue arrow to advance to the next question. Repeat until all 5 questions are complete.

This activity is untimed, you may have as many attempts as you would like and your scores and/or attempts are not tracked.

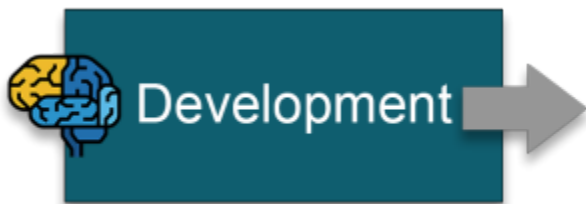
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=51#h5p-5>

References

Mohawk College Official. (2019, Jan 25). UDL at Mohawk College – Tara Dinyer [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/QmqTWP57Uuk>

UDL on Campus. (2015, Oct 7). UDL, Technology and Materials [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/Z777kK8IHDs>

2.2: Applying UDL in the Development Phase



Whether you have had an opportunity to implement UDL in the design phase of your curriculum, implementing it as you start to develop your curriculum, course or program is effective and impactful for learners.

Things to Consider

When developing your course, think about:

- Including content and resources that:
 - Are provided in multiple ways
 - Are accessible, concise, and explicit
 - Use inclusive language
 - Engage students' prior knowledge
 - Allow flexibility in the pace or order of learning
- Embedding learning materials and resources throughout the course to support navigation and allow easy access to learning materials
- Using multimedia resources, accessible images, and materials to illustrate concepts
- Developing assessments that:
 - Specifically assess the learning outcomes or goals
 - Are scaffolded
 - Provide varied and multiple opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge
 - Have explicit instructions and grading scheme or rubric
 - Offer additional supports, should they be required
- Encouraging executive functioning skills and independent learning responsibilities
- Building-in opportunities for reflection, self-assessment, review, remediation, extending learning and collaboration

What Educators Say

In *UDL at Mohawk College* [2:50], Melodie Spencer, a Professor in the Early Childhood Education Program, gives an overview of how she has embedded UDL throughout her courses and teaching philosophy.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=54>

Activity 3: Test your Knowledge

Now that you're familiar with UDL implementation in the development phase, let's test your knowledge! Link the UDL practice to the correct checkpoint(s) in the following 5 question quiz. To complete the quiz, choose the correct response(s), click the "check" button to check your answer, then use the blue arrow to advance to the next question. Repeat until all 5 questions are complete.

This activity is untimed, you may have as many attempts as you would like and your scores and/or attempts are not tracked.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=54#h5p-6>

References

Mohawk College Official. (2019, Jan 25). UDL at Mohawk College – Melodie Spencer [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/bnijcjqigs>

2.3: Applying UDL in the Delivery Phase



While it is hoped that you have been able to include UDL in your curriculum design and development sometimes, as educators, we do not have complete control over the content to be taught. If you have ever inherited a course, textbook selection, learning outcomes or assessment, you have been in this situation. While it is wonderful to be able to embed UDL into the curriculum design and development process, if you have not been able to, the UDL framework can make a significant impact to address issues of equity, inclusion and accessibility in the delivery phase.

Things to Consider

When delivering your instruction, think about:

- Including interactive learning activities with multiple ways to participate
- Providing support for notetaking
- Giving space for learners to work collaboratively
- Offering a variety of communication options for learners to connect with each other and to connect with educator(s)
- Assessing knowledge and skills by including:
 - Assignments that offer some choices regarding how learners submit
 - Additional time or unlimited time for quizzes, tests, and exams
 - Feedback from peers and educator(s)
- Providing interim due dates for large assessments and prompting learners about upcoming assessment(s)
- Leveraging educational technologies or learning management systems for delivery of materials, key information and learning activities

What Educators Say

In *UDL at Mohawk College* [2:27], Lisa Pender, a Professor in the Liberal Studies Program, describes her UDL implementation and the impact of employing UDL on her and her learners.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them

online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=57>

Activity 4: Test your Knowledge

Now that you're familiar with UDL implementation in the delivery phase, let's test your knowledge! Link the UDL practice to the correct checkpoint(s) in the following 5 question quiz. To complete the quiz, choose the correct response, click the "check" button to check your answer, then use the blue arrow to advance to the next question. Repeat until all 5 questions are complete.

This activity is untimed, you may have as many attempts as you would like and your scores and/or attempts are not tracked.

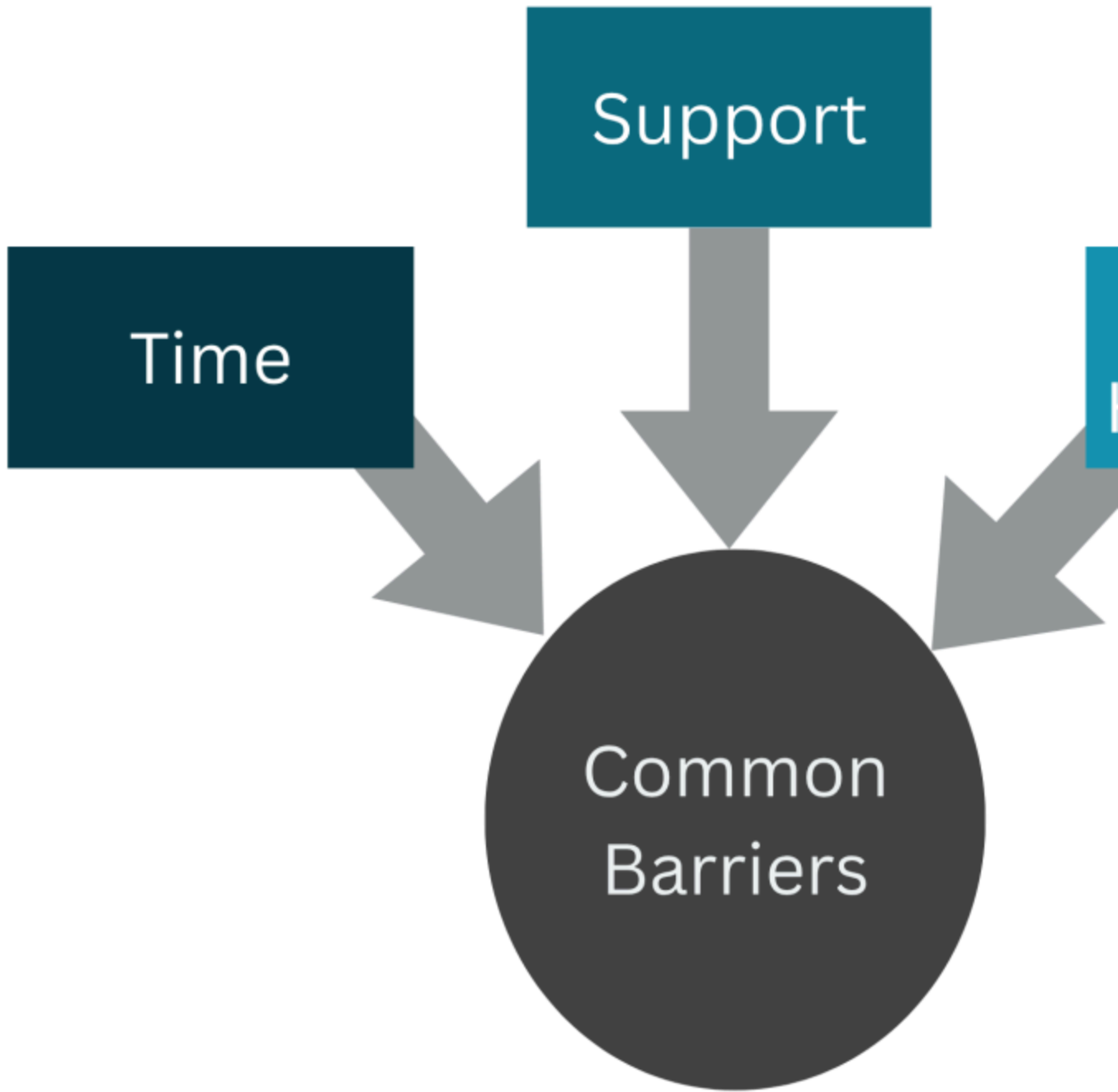
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=57#h5p-7>

References

Mohawk College Official. (2018, Oct 22). UDL at Mohawk College – Lisa Pender [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/9AqOnlL0K9k>

2.4: Barriers to UDL Implementation

By this point, you have learned about the UDL Guidelines, principles, and implementation examples for each phase in the curriculum design, development, and delivery process. While UDL implementation can create a more inclusive, equitable and accessible learning environment for all learners, it is not without challenges. It is imperative to reflect on both learner and educator needs and proactively address possible barriers to your UDL implementation when you can. Some common barriers to UDL implementation in post-secondary education include time, support, UDL knowledge.



Graphic organizer of common UDL barriers which includes time, support and UDL knowledge.

Time



Time, or lack of it, can feel like a barrier for educators; our time to develop or redevelop curriculum or a course is already often tight. Educators who are early in their UDL implementation journey can sometimes feel that they do not have the time needed to write course navigation instructions, offer submission options for assessments, or make learning materials accessible and explicit. Alternatively,

there could be external factors that impede the time for UDL implementation. For example, a course with limited time designated for marking may mean that an educator is unable to include more authentic assessment options or assignment submission options.

Solutions to the barrier of time are contextual; however, there are some ideas to consider. Firstly, UDL implementation should save educators' time. For example, a course with clear assignment instructions or an explicit learning plan meaning less learner questions, thus saving the educator time.

Secondly, communication regarding time requirements for specific UDL interventions are beneficial. For example, discussions with post-secondary leadership can support changes to designated marking time, teaching support and/or additional resources to be able to embed UDL into a course or program.

Lastly, leveraging the technology available can support UDL implementation and save time. For example, if an institution's learning management system has a built-in text-to-speech tool, content provided in HTML format or uploaded as a document allows learners to use the tool for additional content options to learners without significant additional time or effort on the part of the educator.

Time can be a barrier to UDL implementation, but not an insurmountable one.

Support



Support for UDL implementers in higher education in Ontario can feel scarce. There are a variety of reasons, including:

- Few examples of UDL in post-secondary education
- UDL resources and professional development opportunities are often expressly for elementary and secondary education
- Resources and/or supports from other countries can be difficult to apply to the Ontario, post-secondary context

However, UDL support does exist, just not always in the places educators might expect. Within post-secondary institutions, there are a wealth of talented and dedicated educators in a variety of fields and departments. While you may not have a specific UDL support role, it is likely that there are support persons for UDL implementation throughout the institution. Select each support listed below to learn more about each one.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=63#h5p-8>

Creating a list of UDL support persons or groups, for your educational context, can help build a solid support network for your continued UDL implementation.

Knowledge



UDL implementation in post-secondary education is new to many and, with some of the barriers indicated in this unit, it can seem daunting. Even seasoned UDL implementers encounter unique challenges where a solution is not clear. Educators can feel as though they do not have the knowledge they require to implement the UDL Guidelines to reach their goals for equity, inclusion and access. So where can educators, regardless of where they are on their UDL implementation journey, turn to for UDL knowledge?

Along with all of the supports listed in the section above, Twitter (including UDL specific chats),

podcasts, websites dedicated to UDL, books and articles can all provide resources to expand UDL knowledge. Conferences and other professional development opportunities are also ideal spaces to not only gain UDL knowledge, but also network and build community with other UDL implementers.

To find the resources and learning opportunities that are ideal for you, be specific in your search. Along with “Universal Design for Learning”, you may wish to include the following terms in your search:

- Higher or post-secondary education
- Ontario and/or Canada
- Implementation in curriculum design/development/delivery
- Your area of interest or study

What Educators Say

In *UDL at Mohawk College* [2:27] Ryan Iles, a Professor in the Liberal Studies Program, discusses his start to UDL implementation and addresses some common concerns for educators starting their UDL journey.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=63>

Activity 5: Reflecting on Barriers

Consider what barriers may exist in your context that may impede your UDL implementation in the phases of your curriculum design, development and delivery and complete the following:

1. List the barriers that may impact your UDL implementation within your context
2. Identify possible solutions for each identified barrier

If you have no barriers to UDL implementation in your context, you are welcome to complete this activity based on an alternate context in post-secondary education or using some of the examples provided in this module.

You are welcome to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work! This activity is untimed, you may have as many attempts as you would like and your scores and/or attempts are not tracked.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=63#h5p-2>

References

Mohawk College Official. (2018, Oct 22). UDL at Mohawk College – Ryan Iles [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/qjCsBX8IRXw>

2.5: Implementation of UDL

Given what you have learned about UDL thus far, it is likely that you have already implemented elements of it in your teaching. If you have reflected on a lesson, determined the barriers for your learners and made changes for the next delivery you have begun your UDL journey. If you have considered the diverse needs of your learners and proactively provided support, you have already started embedding UDL. If you have questioned whether the assessments you use accurately evaluate your learning outcomes, and made changes to make them more authentic, you are well on your way. Implementing UDL in your current context may seem daunting, but there are some great ways to get started to gain quick benefits for educators and learners.

The following video, *Getting Started* [1:14] by UDL On Campus (2015), offers some quick tips on how to start thinking about and implementing UDL into your curriculum, course and/or program.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#oembed-1>

There are a number of strategic approaches to support UDL implementation in your context. Review the ideas below and determine which approach, or combination of approaches, you feel would suit your context best.

Learning Outcomes

An ideal place to begin with UDL implementation is by reviewing and refining the curriculum or course learning outcomes. Effective implementation requires content to have measurable and explicit learning goals/outcomes. Consider the following implementation steps for your context:

1. Review your learning outcomes/goals and refine them, if required
2. Brainstorm all of the different ways a learner could meet each learning outcome/goal
3. Refine your brainstormed list by considering possible barriers in your context. Ultimately, you want a list of UDL options you can actually offer
4. Embed those UDL options into your curriculum/course
5. Reflect

When using this approach for your UDL implementation, it is important to note that the application of UDL does not modify or provide options for the learning outcomes/goals. Instead, UDL encourages offering students options to obtain knowledge, as well as options to demonstrate their learning to meet those outcomes/goals.

Assessments

UDL can be implemented in diagnostic, formative, or summative assessment methods. UDL assessments are:

- Specific to the course learning outcomes
- Authentic and accurate, as the assessments are designed to measure the learning outcomes and not extraneous skills or knowledge
- Equitable and inclusive in that they provide options so learners can leverage their strengths to show their learning

The video, *UDL and Assessment* [3:09] by UDL On Campus(2014), offers a short, but detailed look at how UDL Guidelines can be included in assessments:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#oembed-2>

Because UDL is not prescriptive regarding the types of assessments used, post-secondary educators have the flexibility needed to create assessments that are construct relevant and provide options to learners to demonstrate their mastery of the content. Below you will find some general tips to support applying the UDL Guidelines to assessments in your context:

- Provide varied assessment methods throughout the course, when you can
- Provide assessment options, when you can
- Provide submission options, when you can
- Base your rubric on the learning outcome/goal, not on the assessment method

You will notice the phrase “when you can” is used above. It is an important note as sometimes our assessments are based on factors that are external to our curriculum/course (e.g., preparing students for governing bodies, etc.).

A Process for Getting Started

Loui Lord Nelson developed a process for UDL implementation that both starts and ends with the essential element of UDL: Reflection focused on learners.

To view the steps of this process, navigate through the dialog cards below using the blue turn button to flip the card and the blue arrow button to advance to the next card.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#h5p-17>

(Nelson, 2014, p. 136)

Plus One Strategy

Thomas J. Tobin, UDL implementer and author, describes UDL as “...really just ‘plus-one’ thinking.”

Meaning for each learning activity, assessment or interaction that learners have, try to “...provide one more way for that interaction to happen” (Battaglia, 2019). For those not sure where to begin with UDL implementation, the +1 strategy parses UDL “into manageable, approachable chunks” (Battaglia, 2019).

To apply the +1 approach, look at what you are already doing in your teaching and learning context and then add one more option for learners. For example:

- If you have provided an email address as a communication option for learners, add an online office hour
- If you currently post lesson content as a PowerPoint, post the same content as a Word document and link to a text-to-speech tool
- If you demonstrate a skill in a synchronous class/lab, add a video of the skill for learners to review

Planning

Once you have determined the best way to proceed with your UDL implementation, planning is essential to avoid some of the challenges with time noted earlier. Remember, the implementation of UDL is a dynamic process; small changes over time will ultimately create a course or curriculum that is more inclusive, equitable and accessible. The learning activity for this topic will walk you through your UDL implementation planning process.

Activity 6: Plan

Considering the UDL elements you would like to include in your course, and being mindful of possible barriers in your context, determine what you can do in each situation:

1. Immediately and/or with little effort

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#h5p-10>

2. Within the semester or academic year

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#h5p-11>

3. When you develop, redevelop, or create a new lesson/module/course

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#h5p-12>

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer

back to your thoughts.

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=65#h5p-2>

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Battaglia, A. (2019, Jun 6). "Plus-One" thinking: A framework for inclusive teaching. University of Texas at Austin Faculty Innovation Center. <https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/news/plus-one-thinking-framework-inclusive-teaching>


Nelson, L. L. (2014) Design and deliver: Planning and teaching using universal design for learning. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

UDL on Campus. (2015, Oct 8). Getting Started [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/_HHvRzemuHA

UDL on Campus. (2014, Jun 26). UDL and Assessment [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/AzRsqPqGlPw>

2.6: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: UDL Course Assessment Tool

Mohawk College's [UDL Course Assessment](#)  is an interactive tool that can support you as an educator to self-assess your current UDL implementation. It offers targeted resources to learn more about specific UDL elements that may be beneficial in post-secondary and technology-enabled learning environments.

For this activity, use the link provided above or the image below to access and complete the UDL Course Assessment, keeping in mind your current teaching and learning context. You will obtain a report at the end of the assessment. As you complete the activity, you may find it helpful to have the [UDL Course Assessment Guide](#) downloaded for reference.

Universal Design for Learning

COURSE ASSESSMENT

a tool for educators



Version 4.0

Further Learning

The following are some resources to deepen your learning about UDL in post-secondary education and its relation to technology:

- [UDL on Campus](#) has full of resources and examples of UDL implementation in post-secondary education, including environments that are technology-enabled. The [Getting Started](#) and [Course Design](#) pages are excellent and cover a wide range of topics we have only had a brief opportunity to touch on in this module.
- [UDL Navigators in Higher Education: A Field Guide](#) by Jodie Black and Eric Moore, serves as an excellent “how-to” manual for post-secondary educators. Whether you are just starting your UDL implementation or are further along in your journey, this book will have something for you.
- Mohawk College has made their UDL implementation efforts and resources public.

Implementers are welcome to access the full UDL Standard, as well as their resources and implementation ideas through [Universal Design for Learning Resources](#) at Mohawk College.

3.1: Principles of Accessible Legislation

Every individual in Canada is entitled to fundamental human rights and to live free from discrimination and harassment. Here in Canada, these human rights are protected by federal, provincial, and territorial legislation (Human Rights Legal Support Centre, 2021).



These laws arise out of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that was proclaimed by the newly developed United Nations in 1948. Broken down further, each Canadian province and territory have their own law against discrimination that apply to all provincially regulated activities. This includes protecting the fundamental human rights for persons with disabilities.

Activity 1: Case Study

Imagine you are planning a HyFlex (hybrid flexible) course with 250 students. All class sessions and learning activities will be offered in-person, and asynchronously online. You have planned for a mid-term group presentation, where students will be researching information and teaching material to their fellow students (flipped classroom). There will also be a final exam as your assessment for the course.

Two weeks before the course begins, you receive a message from Student Accessibility Services with the following accommodation requests, for three separate students:

- Recording of all in-class instruction
- Access to classmate's notes, instructor's notes, or a notetaker
- Captions for all verbal information
- Alternate formats – text descriptions for visual images, machine-readable text format for all print materials

Six weeks into your course, about 2 weeks before the mid-term group presentation is due, you receive the following accommodation requests from Student Accessibility Services for 2 other students:

- Allot 1.5 times the regular testing time for completion
- Allow alternate format to an oral presentation
- Stagger exam scheduling – can only take one exam within a 24 hour period

As you work through this module, think about how UDL supports this HyFlex course you are planning.

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=73#h5p-2>

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3.2: AODA and the Learning Environment

In 2005, the Ontario Government established the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) with the goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025. The focus was to ensure persons with disabilities could fully participate in everyday life in our communities and the economy.

Educational institutions operating in Ontario have a legal duty to take steps to prevent and respond to breaches of the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). This responsibility includes maintaining accessible, inclusive, discrimination and harassment-free education environments that respect human rights. The Integrated Accessibility Standards help with doing just that.

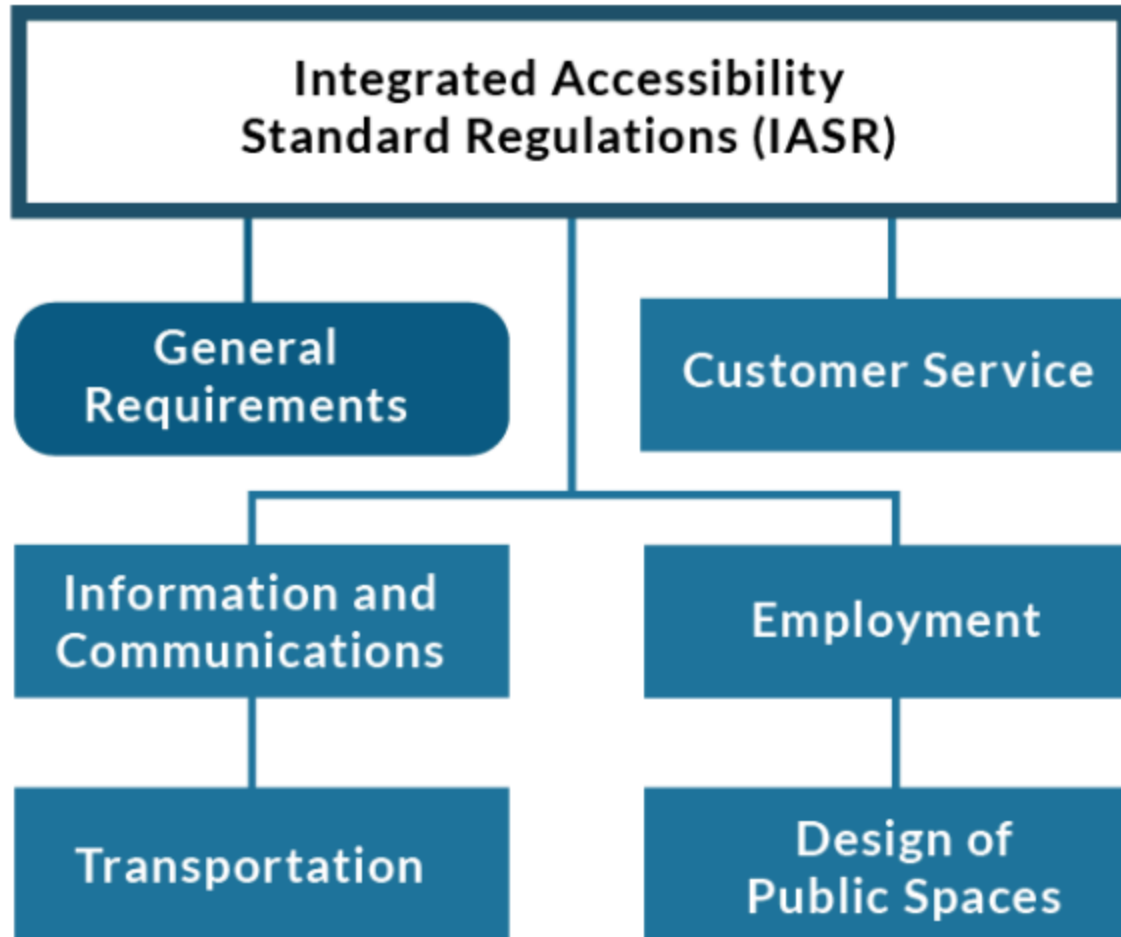
The video, *Discover: An Educator's Introduction to the AODA* [3:27] by Ontario Universities (2013), provides an overview of the AODA and how it applies to educators. It also shows some examples on how instruction can be made more accessible to all students.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=78#oembed-1>

The AODA established the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (IASR), a grouping of legal requirements that institutions must follow to help identify, remove, and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities. These requirements are divided in two categories: General Requirements and Accessibility Standards.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

AODA



(Accessibility Services Canada, n.d.)

General Requirements

The General Requirements include training, procurement, planning, accountability (reporting), and policies and processes.

Did You know?

Accessibility training for employees and volunteers is mandatory under the AODA. Check with your institution on whether that training is delivered and ensure you have taken it.

Accessibility Standards

At this time, the Accessibility Standards comprises of five requirements necessary to ensure a basic standard of accessibility in the following key areas of day-to-day life:

- Customer service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)


Note: Each standard is alternatively being reviewed every five years. When deemed necessary, requirements and implementation timeframe are added or modified. Changes to the standards may require institutions to re-train all employees on its developments.

Roles and Responsibilities of Educators under the IASR

Following the requirements under the IASR in the learning environment can take many forms, such as accessible information and communications. The information and communications standard outlines requirements for creating, providing, and receiving information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. This includes:

1. Websites and web content
2. Educational training resources and materials
3. Training to professors and other educators
4. Libraries of educational and training institutions

1. Websites and Web Content

All internet websites and web content, including web-based applications, must conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG\) 2.0 Level A and AA](#)  other than,

- [Success criterion 1.2.4 Captions \(Live\)](#) , and
- [Success criterion 1.2.5 Audio Description \(Pre-recorded\)](#) 

Did You Know?

If you intend to make any of your course content publicly available through an internet website, you must comply with the Information and Communications Standard's requirements as it relates to websites and web content. Check with your campus on what resources are available to assist you in meeting the information and communications standards.

2. Educational Training Resources and Materials

Upon request, institutions must provide students who have disabilities educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs of the person with a disability by:

- procuring through purchase or obtaining by other means an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format of educational or training resources or materials, where available, or
- arranging for the provision of a comparable resource in an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format, if educational or training resources or materials cannot be procured, obtained by other means or converted into an accessible format.

Consider This:

The Portable Document Format (better known as PDF) is an open standard, maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Your students can easily view these compressed files around the world on any smart phones, Windows or Mac OS using the free Acrobat Reader DC software. These compressed files also need less bandwidth to be uploaded.

1. Follow Microsoft [Accessibility video training](#) to learn how to create accessible Word documents and PowerPoint presentations ready to be converted into an accessible PDF.
2. Once you convert your Microsoft document into an Adobe Acrobat PDF document, follow the tutorial [Create and verify PDF accessibility](#) to learn how to use the accessibility tool provided in Acrobat to do the final accessibility touch ups. Please note that this step requires the paid licence Acrobat Pro version 10 or 11. The free Acrobat Reader DC software is not enough.

Exceptions

When the materials requested are deemed unconvertible, an explanation must be provided to the requester, along with a summary of the information. More information on how to respond to such requests can be found in your academic accommodation policy.

Did You Know?

Producers of educational or training textbooks for educational or training institutions are also required to make accessible or conversion-ready versions of the printed materials available. Work with your institution's library services to assist you in sourcing accessible formats for your educational materials.

Now think about this question: how does using an accessible learning platform and selecting accessible or conversion-ready format educational materials help students with disabilities feel more included?

3. Additional Training to Professors and Other Educators

Institutions are required to provide training to educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction and keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

Did You Know?

By following this training, you are already working on this requirement. If you believe you need more support, please ask your supervisor or your manager about more training, resources available and support services to help you create an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities.

4. Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

When requested, and where available, institution libraries shall provide, procure or acquire by other means an accessible or conversion-ready format of print, digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.

Applicability

- Print resources can include but are not limited to, books, magazines, posters, journals,

newspapers and newspaper articles.

- Digital or multimedia resources are usually a combination of text and audio and include, but are not limited to, materials such as films, videos, CD-ROMS and DVDs.

Unconvertible Information

When the requested materials or resources are unconvertible, the library needs to explain the reason why and provide a summary of the information in a format that takes into account the accessibility needs of the person who made the request.

Did You Know?

The Marrakesh VIP Treaty is a treaty allowing for copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible versions of books and other copyrighted works for visually impaired persons. For more information, please contact your library service

Remember: Accessibility is a proactive solution to providing equal access for all. It is the baseline of equal service. Accessibility is what we should expect to be ready for us without asking or planning ahead. It can be provided by following an easy-to-implement set of standards and practices that make “adaptation” unnecessary. We can benefit from accessibility without announcing or explaining our disabilities (Pulrang, 2013).

Activity 2: Reflect on AODA Requirements

1. Review your current course/training plan. Do all your information, platforms, source materials, etc. meet the AODA requirements?
2. How would you go about implementing the IASR requirements in your hyflex course?
3. Read this [AODA Checklist \(PDF\)](#) ↓ or [AODA Checklist \(Word\)](#) ↓ to find out steps with tools and resources.
4. An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=78#h5p-13>

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Pulrang, A. (2013, Aug 17). Accessibility vs. Accommodation [Blog post]. <http://disabilitythinking.blogspot.com/2013/08/accessibility-and-accommodation.html>

3.4: Legislative Process for Compliance

Each legislation establishes a process to ensure institutions are meeting all the legal requirements set out. And in some cases, a process for the public to file complaints in situations where they feel discriminated against. As an instructor delivering service on behalf of the institution, it is your responsibility to ensure that you follow these processes and ensure your actions are continuously compliant with the law.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Post-secondary educational institutions are considered “Broader Public Sector” organizations under [Schedule 1](#) of the AODA. As such, they are required to:

1. File compliance reports to the Ontario government every two years
 - Reports are pre-set, with a list of pre-formed questions requiring institutions to attest to their compliance with various areas of the standards
 - Signed by a senior official that can bind the organization
2. Develop an Accessibility Plan that:
 - Describes how the institution will work towards meeting the standards and improve accessibility
 - Plan must be renewed at least every 5 years
 - Develop annual progress reports to demonstrate activities
 - Must be posted and made available publicly

At most institutions, the completion of compliance reports and development of an accessibility plan is facilitated centrally. Your institution may require each department to attest to their compliance with areas of the AODA that impact their work.


Under the AODA, the Officer has the ability to fine individuals up to \$2,000/day for each day they are in contravention of the act, or fine corporations up to \$15,000/day. Your institution may have additional policies and/or processes to manage the responsibilities of central administration, departments, and individuals as it relates to areas of the AODA.

As a representative of your institution, all information you create or make available publicly is subject to AODA requirements. This includes public websites and web content, applications, and publications. Your institution may have internal policies and procedures on ownership and accountability of information dissemination—it is important for you to understand what they may be to ensure you meet the AODA requirements set out.

Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)

The Code has legal primacy over all other laws including the AODA. This means that even though you created content or delivered information that meets AODA requirements, you may still have to further adjust your information to suit an individual’s specific needs. Hopefully, with the flexibility built in using UDL principles, any individual adjustments you make will be simple and not arduous.

When an individual believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment, which includes not receiving reasonable accommodation, they can file an application with the [Human Rights Tribunal of](#)

[Ontario \(HRTO\)](#) . The HRTO can facilitate and settle disputes through mediation, or if the parties do not agree to mediation, a hearing will be held. The HRTO will consider if all the principles under the Human Rights Code have been met by the institution.

Procedural Component

The HRTO will also review whether the institution met its duty to accommodate. This duty includes a procedural component, and substantive component. The process to assess an accommodation (procedural component) is just as important as the final solution (substantive component). This means there needs to be meaningful interaction between the parties focusing on the student's needs and consideration of whether the education provider can accommodate those needs (OHRC, 2018).

Consider This:

In a 2012 Tribunal decision, a student with a visual impairment was enrolled in an education program with a practicum component. The student cited discrimination from the school due to her disability. Among other allegations, the student noted that provision of alternate formats for educational materials was delayed. She had requested for the alternate formats in early September, and the school ultimately provided them in late November, after multiple discussions of other performance issues. Her first practicum placement was terminated by the host school and her second placement was also unsuccessful. The student was unable to complete her coursework and ultimately failed the program.

While the HRTO agreed that the student had not met the bona fide academic requirements, they ultimately found that discrimination had occurred as the provision of alternate formats were delayed, and it did not meet undue hardship clause to provide these formats in a timely manner.

So, while the substantive component – providing the materials in the requested format – was provided, because there was a significant delay in providing them, it created inequitable access to education and the institution was still found to have been discriminatory (Canadian Legal Information Institute [CanLII], 2012).

Record Retention

When you receive an accommodation request, it is important that you document your process. As we have highlighted, the procedural component of accommodation requires the education provider to determine what kind of modifications or accommodations might be required to allow a student to fully participate in school. While Student Accessibility Services can assist in devising solutions, the educator is also required to review the requests and participate in the process of solution-finding. Documentation of this review and process will support your position that you have met your duty to accommodate under the law. Documentation could come in the form of:

- Written offers of accommodation solutions
- Analysis of accommodations needs against bona fide academic requirements
- Meeting notes
- Emails
- “Contract” on agreed-upon assessment criteria, etc.

Documentation is also helpful in validating the credibility of your case in a Tribunal, should a human

rights claim be made to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO). HRTO cases can take a long time to be heard, and the process itself can take several years. Documentation of events and outcomes will help if you need to testify years later regarding a situation.

Consider This:

In a 2011 Tribunal decision, a student alleges her professors discriminated against her on the basis of her disability, in part, by making humiliating and derogatory remarks intended to drive her from the classroom. The professors deny vigorously that they made any such comments. As these allegations were uncorroborated, the HRTO relied on documentary evidence presented – emails and letters – which showed the professors were willing to accommodate but were very concerned that the student was at risk of academic failure. Based on the testimony and evidence presented, “on the preponderance of probabilities” the HRTO found that the University did not directly discriminate against the student on the basis of her disability (CanLII, 2011).

Note: The allegations of said events occurred during the student’s time at the University in 2004, but the hearing was not held until 2011.

Activity 4: Review Your Lesson Plan

Review your lesson plan. Are all your essential academic requirements documented? How do you intend to document any adjustments to your plan and/or assessments in order to meet an accommodation request?

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don’t lose any of your work!

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disabilities#Duty%20to%20accommodate

3.3: OHRC and Accommodations



(sammateocountyphotos, 2012; PittCaleb, 2013; taberandrew, 2008)


Ideally, developing a course utilizing UDL principles and following accessibility guidelines will proactively meet the needs of all students, including supports outlined in accommodation requests. This should help reduce time spent in retrofitting accommodations after the fact. However, as there is no “one size fits all” approach to learning, the need for individual accommodations within a learning environment will always be present. Designing a course with accessibility in mind and utilizing principles of UDL, the ability to accommodate individual requests and to pivot a portion of your course should require less labour.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), people are protected from discrimination, either direct or indirect, in “services”, based on protected grounds. This protection includes education as a social area since education is a service within the meaning of the Code. This means that students with disabilities are covered by the Code. There are also protections under the Code for those who experience reprisal or are threatened with reprisal for trying to exercise their human rights (OHRC, 2003).

“Education, in its broadest sense, is a ‘service’ within the meaning of the Code. The scope of “educational services” will include the mastery of knowledge, academic standards, evaluation and accreditation.”

— Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2004

Principles of Accommodation Under the Code

Accommodation of students with disabilities is governed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and by provincial human rights statutes, like the Ontario Human Rights Code enacted in 1962. [The Ontario Human Rights Code \(OHRC\)](#)  makes illegal any actions that discriminate against people based on protected grounds in a protected social area.

As you read through the following list, think about if any of these grounds or social areas surprise you as protected? If so, why? Are there grounds or areas that you expected to see that do not appear here? What are these grounds or areas?

[table id=5]

What is an Accommodation?

Accommodation is one way of preventing and removing barriers that hold back, obstruct, or impede students with disabilities from participating fully in the educational environment in a way that is accessible and appropriate to their own unique circumstances. The principle of accommodation involves three considerations: dignity, individualization, and inclusion (OHRC, n.d.).

Defining Appropriate Accommodation

There are a wide variety of accommodations provided to students with disabilities at the post-secondary

level. These may include:

- Accommodations to improve the physical accessibility of facilities
- Provision of, or training on adaptive technologies
- Sign language interpretation services
- Real-time captioning
- Recording lectures
- In-class support such as, for example, notetakers
- Modifications to evaluation methodologies, such as extended test-taking time, or alternative examination formats

The accommodation process in post-secondary is primarily the responsibility of Student Accessibility Services. It is this office's responsibility to collect and maintain relevant documentation to support the accommodation request, work with students in developing their accommodation plan, and prepare communication to be shared with instructors.

Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities



The Ontario Human Rights Commission released the [policy on accessible education for students with disabilities](#)^[7]. This policy was designed to help educators recognize and fulfil their obligations under the Code. The intention is to create a more inclusive educational experience with policy and procedures that will help prevent and remove barriers. In addition, effective implementation of this policy will address issues before human rights claims are made to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO).

The following are steps education providers can take to provide students with disabilities with the greatest opportunity to participate fully in educational services:

STEP 1: Promoting inclusive design

STEP 2: Removing barriers

STEP 3: Accommodating remaining needs (OHRC, n.d.)

Did you Know?

The OHRC requires all post-secondary institutions to have a student academic accommodation policy that outlines the process in which accommodations are considered and reviewed. You may want to review your institution's process in managing accommodations to ensure you are following the process and engaging with the support units that can assist you.

The Duty to Accommodate

The duty to accommodate rests on the educational institution as a whole—not just on the specific office for students with disabilities. All members of the post-secondary institution have a role to play (OHRC, 2018). For example:

- Faculty and staff have a duty to educate themselves about disability-related issues, to interact with students in a non-discriminatory manner, to engage in the accommodation process, and to provide appropriate accommodation to the point of undue hardship.
- Staff and faculty responsible for designing or developing new or revised facilities, services, policies, processes, courses, or curricula have a responsibility to ensure that these are designed inclusively, with the needs of persons with disabilities in mind.
- Clear and reasonable processes and guidelines for seeking accommodation should be in place at all post-secondary institutions, and these should be clearly communicated to all students.
- The process of accommodation, as well as the outcome, should be respectful of the dignity of the persons affected, and should take into account the importance of integration and full participation. Any planning for accessibility should recognize that persons with disabilities are important stakeholders in the process.

Duty to Inquire 8.6.1

In general, the duty to accommodate a disability exists for needs that are known or ought to be known. Education providers are not, as a rule, expected to accommodate disabilities they are unaware of. However, in some circumstances, an instructor may notice a student who has been performing well, suddenly start struggling. Or a student's conduct in the classroom suddenly changes.

A respectful way to inquire would be:

- Asking whether there is anything a student needs in the way of support to help them participate effectively at school.
- Students should not be pressured to share more information than they are comfortable sharing.

If the student discloses that they could use support, then the instructor should direct them to the Student Accessibility Services (Offices for Students with Disabilities) which can help students get the support they need and to which they are legally entitled.

Confidentiality and Protecting Disability-Related Information

Students at the post-secondary level should not be required to reveal their private medical information

to, or seek accommodation directly from, their professors, instructors, teaching assistants, administrative staff, etc. as a condition of receiving academic accommodations (OHRC, 2018).

In order to avoid labelling or stereotyping, it is essential confidentiality be maintained. The institution as a whole is responsible for ensuring that the medical information in its possession is secure, and the student's right to privacy and confidentiality is protected. It is essential that the information requested is limited to what is specifically needed for the accommodation which is often handled by the Student Accessibility Services (or Offices for Students with Disabilities).

- In general, disclosure of a disability should only be shared at the choice of the student.

Accommodation letters or plans provided from the Student Accessibility Services to instructors will not include a diagnosis, but a set of accommodations required to enable the student to have equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance, or to enjoy the same level of benefits and privileges enjoyed by others.

Undue Hardship

Education providers have a legal duty to accommodate students with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. In many cases, it will not be difficult to accommodate a student's disability. Accommodation may simply involve making policies, rules, and requirements more flexible. While doing this may involve some administrative inconvenience, inconvenience by itself is not a factor in assessing undue hardship.

The Code prescribes only three considerations when assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship:

- Cost
- Outside sources of funding, if any
- Health and safety requirements, if any

No other considerations can be properly taken into account under Ontario law. Therefore, factors such as institutional inconvenience, student or instructor morale, third-party preferences, and collective agreements are not valid considerations in assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship.

It is important to note that the "undue hardship" threshold is quite high, and the educational provider has the onus of proof.

Did You Know?

The OHRC requires all post-secondary institutions to have a student academic accommodation policy that outlines the process in which accommodations are considered and reviewed. You may want to review your institution's process in managing accommodations to ensure you are following the process and engaging with the support units that can assist you.

Academic Freedom

The Commission has taken the position that "academic freedom is unrelated to the duty to accommodate

and should not be a defence to accommodating persons with disabilities” (OHRC, 2003, P. 61). The purpose of academic freedom is to protect the special role of institutions of higher education in the free search for truth, and its free exposition. As such, it relates mainly to freedom of research and of expression in instruction. It will be rare for a disability-related accommodation to impinge on academic freedom.

Academic Integrity

Once receiving appropriate accommodation, a student must be able to meet bona fide academic requirements, such as meeting academic standards for admission, demonstrating specific skills, mastering the curriculum, and passing the class, course, or program.

In one case, the HRTO stated (cited in OHRC, 2018):

“The purpose of accommodation is to allow students with disabilities to demonstrate their ability to master the content and skills required to successfully pass the course without disadvantage because of their disability... Accommodation does not alter the academic standards by which success in a course is determined. “

Education providers, particularly at the post-secondary level, should clearly set out what the bona fide academic requirements of a course or program are, to enhance transparency, consistency, fairness, and so that students know what is expected of them. For example, it may likely be an essential requirement that a student master core aspect of a course curriculum. It is much less likely that it will be an essential requirement to demonstrate that mastery in a particular format, unless mastery of that format (e.g., oral communication) is also a vital requirement of the program.

This OHRC (2013) video, *Working Together: Part 3. Understanding the Duty to Accommodate* [5:31], briefly explains your rights and responsibilities under the Code and the AODA.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=84#oembed-1>

Activity 3: Reflect on Case Study

Think back to your HyFlex course from Activity 1. Imagine there is a mandatory in-class group presentation. As you will recall, one student has made an accommodation request that involves limiting oral presentations. When taking into account accommodation options, the instructor considers the following:

- Asking the accommodated student to let the group know that they have accommodations so they can work out the student’s role within the group
- Asking the accommodated student to present alone
- Placing all accommodated students together in one group and giving the group extra time to complete the work

For each proposed solution, can you identify what principle of accommodation is involved? Are these considerations met with these proposed solutions? Why or why not? What must the instructor do to meet the obligations?

You are invited to reflect in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work!

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3.5: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: Responding to Accommodation Requests

Now that you understand the legal implications in managing accessibility and Human Rights Code requirements:

- How has your approach changed in considering the accommodation requests in the case study?
- Has your response to the requests changed based on the application of UDL principles?
- How about meeting accessibility requirements upfront?







What you should notice is that by applying UDL principles and accessibility requirements, many of the accommodation requests would have been addressed. This means, likely, these accommodation requests will no longer exist in your course. This is the intent of creating equitable access—that everyone is able to consume and access the information you provide in the manner that they need to.

What you will also realize is that there will be individual accommodations that, no matter how closely you apply UDL and accessibility principles, will continue to exist. However, the intent is that with flexibility and multiple avenues to deliver information and allowing students to transmit their understanding of course materials back to you, your options to adjust for individual accommodation requests will increase and the subsequent work required will be significantly reduced.

You may consider using this [Word](#) ↓ or [PDF](#) ↓ checklist to help you respond to accommodation requests.

Further Learning

The following are some resources to deepen your learning about the AODA and OHRC and their application in post-secondary education:

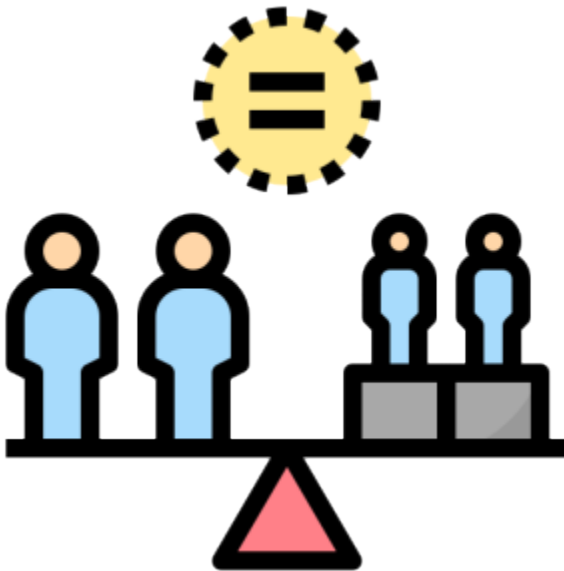
- [Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)  under AODA Part II section includes regulation on:
 - 15. Educational and Training Resources and materials etc.
 - 16. Training to educators
 - 17. Producers of educational or training material
 - 18. Libraries of educational and training institutions
- [Guide to the Act](#)  summarises what is in the AODA, including where to look in the Act to find exactly what it says about the topic. There is also an index for the Act at the end of the guide.
- Accessibility Services Canada (formerly Accessibility Ontario) has detailed information about [AODA Questions & Answers](#) 
- [OHRC eLearning](#)  program provides all Ontarians with free online courses to learn about their human rights and responsibilities, including:
- [Working Together: The Code and the AODA](#) 
- [AccessForward](#)  website provides free government recommended training resources specifically developed for organizations to meet their accessibility training requirements, such as:

- [Information and Communications Standard](#) module covers the requirements for providing and receiving information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Many Institutions also provide accessibility training for their Administrative, Faculty, and Support Staff. Here are some of them:
 - [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\) & Ontario Human Rights Code \(OHRC\) Training](#) by the AODA Colleges Committee
 - [AODA Accessibility in Teaching Training Module](#) from King's University College at Western University
 - [Module 1 — Understanding the AODA and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) from Council of Ontario Universities, University of Toronto
 - [Accessible Services for Colleges, Customer Service Standards: Training for Administrative Staff](#) from Algonquin College

4.1: What is EDI?

EDI is an acronym that includes the three interrelated concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion. When you think of these three words, what comes to mind for you? What do you notice? Do you notice differences, similarities, or relationships between these three words? Let's first look at some formal definitions with examples and guiding questions for each of these terms.

Equity



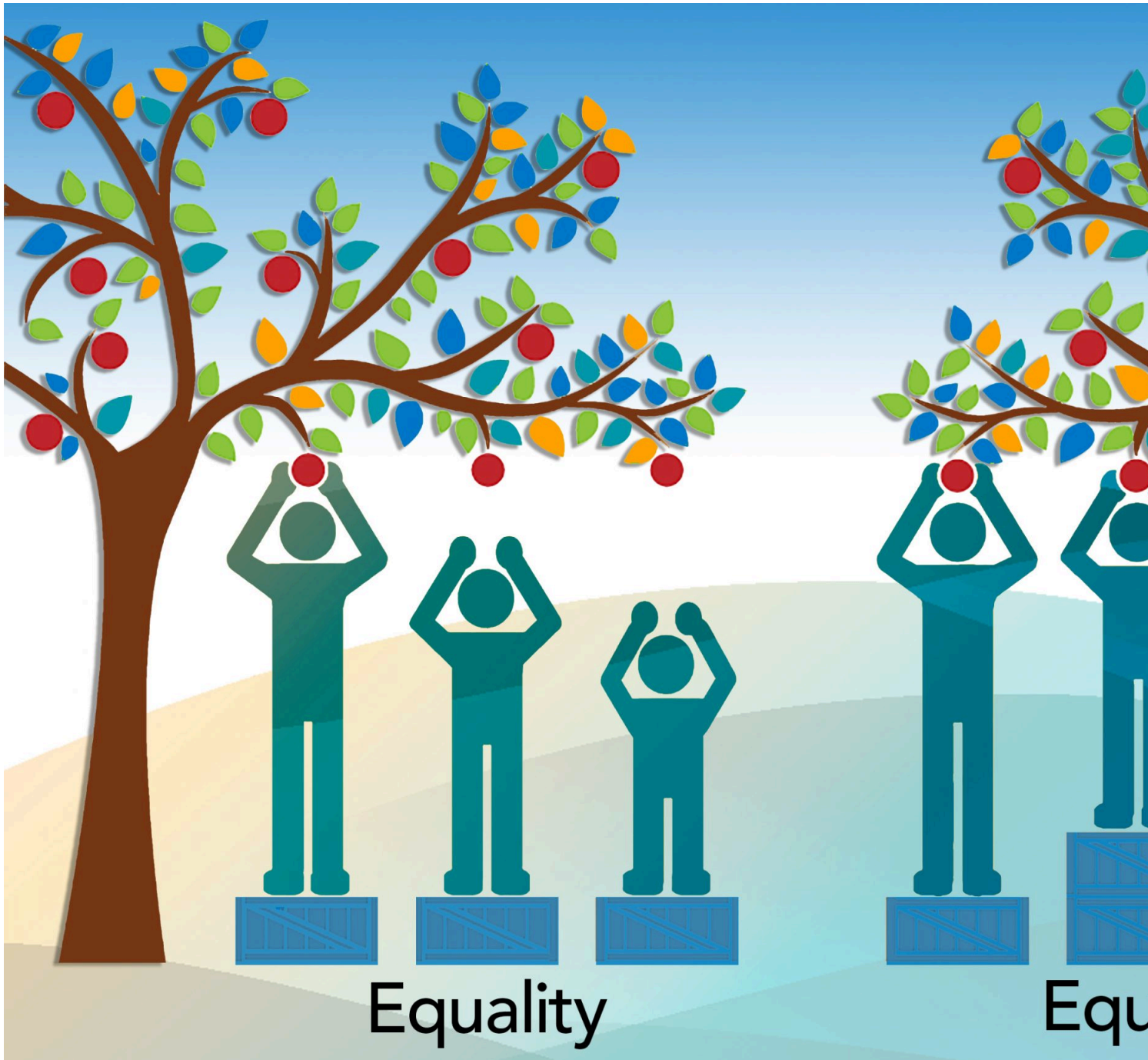
(Icon made by noomtah, www.flaticon.com)

We should first start with what equality is and what equity is, as the two concepts are generally confused with one another.

- Equality generally means treating people the same way, to give everyone equal access to opportunities and benefits in society.

- Equity includes treating some people differently, to take into consideration some people's particular needs and situations (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.)

For example, in the picture below, three people of different heights are trying to reach an apple on a tree. On the left, equality shows everyone is given the same height box to stand on, so only the tallest person could get the apple. On the right, equity shows each person is provided with different numbers of boxes that help all of them get the apple.



(Saskatoon Health Region, 2014)

Equity is a process that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity appreciates that

privileges and barriers exist and that, as a result, we all don't start from the same place. Rather, each of us comes from a different background. Equity is an approach that starts with acknowledging this unequal starting place and makes efforts to address and change this imbalance (Bolger, 2020).

Designing instruction: In post-secondary settings, this means, for example, in a course, the instructor does not expect students to have a camera on their computer, or the ability to draw a figure on a screen. Selecting a textbook that is available in digital format

Delivering instruction: Providing grace days; how you provide feedback on assessments, for example, hand-written comments on an essay

Diversity



(Icon made by surang, www.flaticon.com)

Now, take a minute to think about the diversity of your own team or organization. What do you think? How would your experience change if you were of a different gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or ability?

Diversity is the presence, in an organization or a community, of a wide range of people with different backgrounds, abilities and attributes including ethnicity, race, colour, religion, age, gender and sexual orientation (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Designing instruction: Selecting images and examples that reflect various ethnicities, what a family looks like, etc.

Delivering instruction: Allowing space for a variety of respondents with different attributes and backgrounds to contribute

Organizations may ask these questions if they are interested in promoting diversity:

- How can our organization ensure our membership reflects the diversity of society?

- How can we encourage diversity through recruitment?
- Why aren't we appealing to a more diverse group of candidates?

Inclusion



(Icon made by Freepik, www.flaticon.com)

As you work through the content below, think about how you might react if someone asked you, “What is your organization doing to become a more inclusive environment?”

Inclusion refers to taking into account differences among individuals and groups when designing something (e.g., policy, program, curriculum, building, shared space) to avoid creating barriers. Inclusion is about people with different identities feeling or being valued and welcomed within a given setting. As long-time DEI educator, [Verna Myers](#) (2018) puts it: “Diversity is being asked to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”

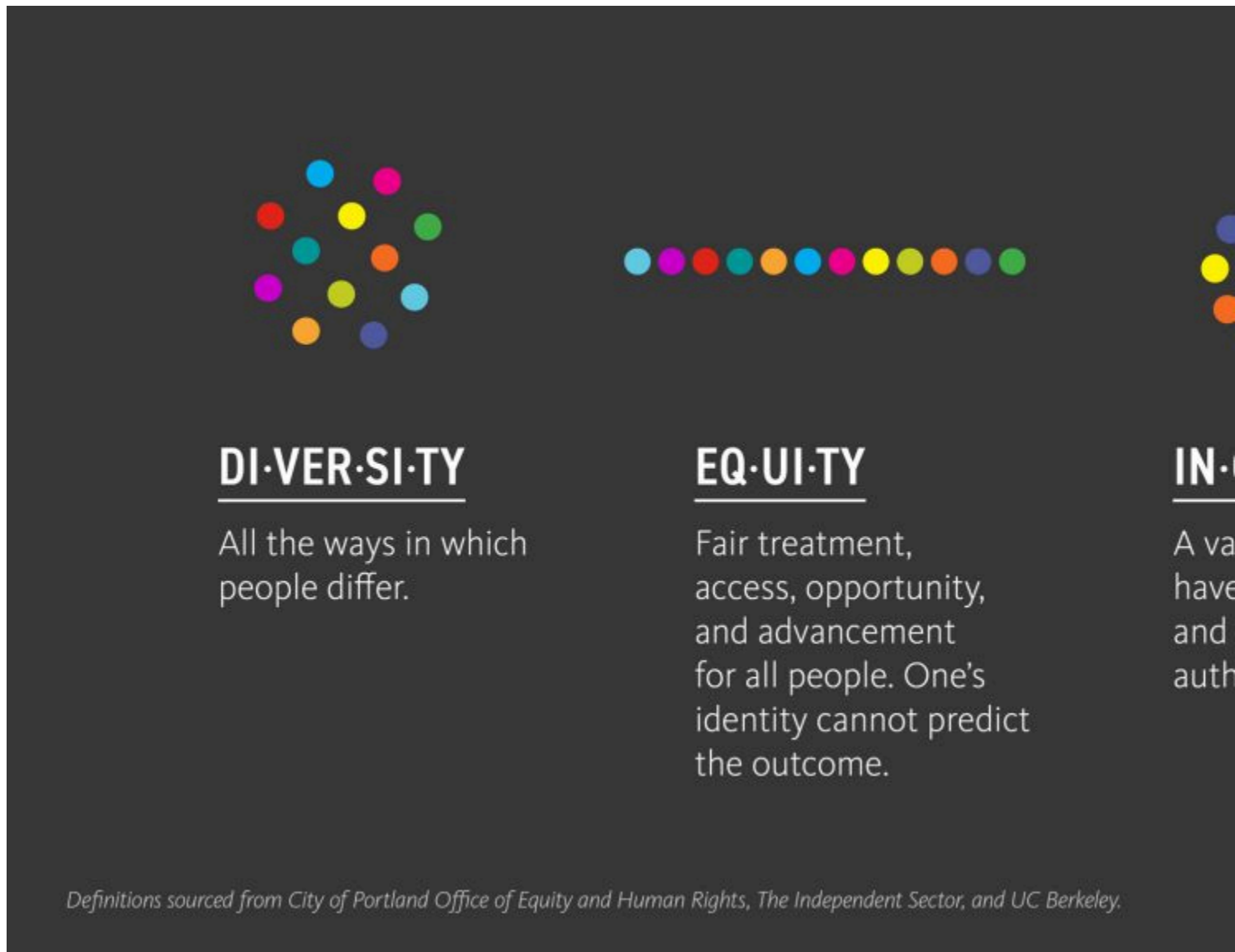
Designing Instruction: In the post-secondary setting, this means, designing assessments while, for example, not assuming that all students prepare for a pop quiz the same way. When using visuals to explain concepts, selecting images and videos that show diversity. For example, avoiding stereotypes (e.g., what does a family look like, what an engineer looks like).

Delivering Instruction: Repeating a student’s question so that everyone can hear it. Providing captions on videos, group work, and lecture presentations.

If one is focused on inclusivity, an organization may ask:

- What is the lived experience for those who are marginalized within the organization?
- Are there barriers in the way of marginalized individuals feeling a sense of acceptance and belonging?
- Are there actions or attitudes, direct or indirect, that we are doing as an organization that is impacting more diverse teams (Bolger, 2020)?

What Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Really Means



The infographic features three columns of text, each preceded by a graphic of colorful dots. The first column, 'DI·VER·SI·TY', has a cluster of 12 dots in various colors (red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, cyan). The second column, 'EQ·UI·TY', has a horizontal line of 12 dots in the same color palette. The third column, 'IN·', has a partial view of 3 dots (yellow, orange, blue).

DI·VER·SI·TY
All the ways in which people differ.

EQ·UI·TY
Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. One's identity cannot predict the outcome.

IN·
A va
have
and
auth

Definitions sourced from City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, The Independent Sector, and UC Berkeley.

(Portland, 2020)

When examining these concepts together, we can say that equity is described as fairness, sameness, and appreciating diversity and inclusion. Diversity is often perceived to be about points of view, representation, and supporting inclusion. Inclusion is about creating environments open to feedback, supporting diversity, and being transparent and flexible.

There are overlaps and contrasts here, and it can be difficult at first to disentangle these definitions:

- Equity is not an outcome. Equity refers to the process a company consistently engages in to ensure that people with marginalized identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop— regardless of their identity
- Diversity is an outcome: “Wow, this company is really diverse!”
- Inclusion is also an outcome: “We do frequent internal temperature checks, and as far as we know, we have an inclusive and welcoming place for women and people of color here” (Bolger,

2020).

Putting this all together, in the post-secondary setting, EDI means being intentional about EDI right at the beginning of curriculum design, through development and into delivery. The UDL Guidelines introduced in Module 1 support us, as post-secondary educators, to center EDI goals in our teaching and learning environments. UDL offers a clear and concise map to ensure we are reducing barriers for all of our learners, as often as possible.

When considering EDI in courses/modules/lessons that you have already created, use the key guiding questions to review your design and your material then make adjustments where necessary.

Activity 1: Reflect on EDI in Your Organization

Think about a process within your organization where you play a key role in either hiring, promoting, or evaluating individuals (students, employees, etc.). Try to specify where that individual decision-making plays a part in this process. Are you able to identify your biases? Have you tried to gather more information to make the process more equitable? How will you use what you've learned to create a more inclusive environment?

You are invited to record your reflection in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=98#h5p-2>

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4.2: Positionality and Intersectionality

Now that you have spent some time reflecting on equity, diversity, and inclusion, let's dive a bit deeper into how our social identities, positionality, and privilege(s) intersect.

Positionality

Positionality refers to the personal values, views, and location in time and space that influence how one engages with and understands the world. It is wrapped up in the dynamics of power and privilege. For example, your gender, race, class, and other aspects of your social identities influence and inform how you move through the world, what knowledge you produce and value, and the biases through which everything you say, think, and do, is filtered, intentionally or otherwise.

Moreover, positionality is experienced differently in different contexts, and can dictate how much access you have (to resources, support, etc.) in society (The University of British Columbia, n.d.). In this sense, we cannot ignore “the power inherent in . . . social positions” (Misawa, 2010, p. 26).

Intersectionality

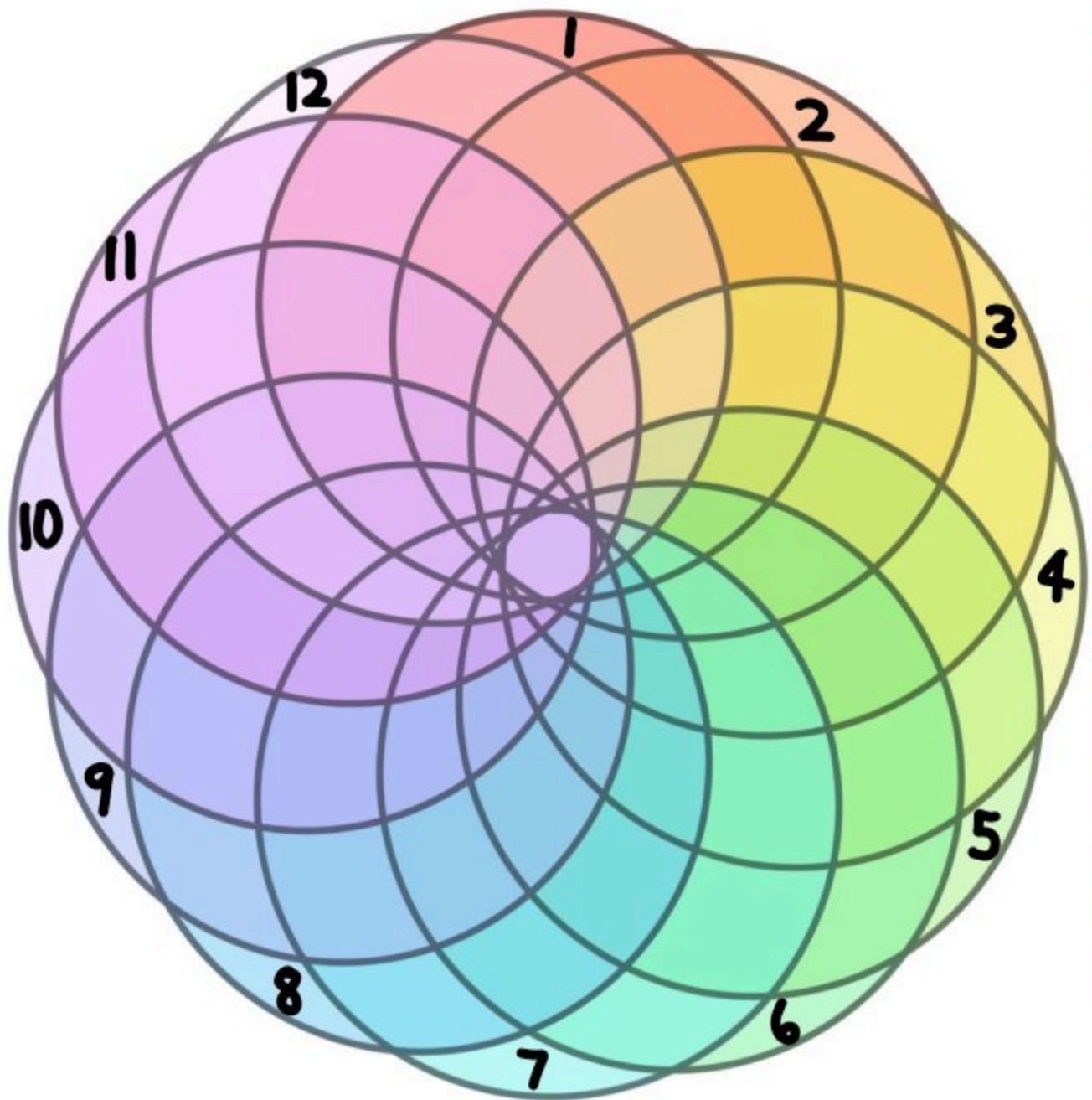
In this video, *What is Intersectionality?* [1:54] by the National Association of Independent Schools (2018), Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw talks about the study of how overlapping or intersecting social identities relate to systems and structures of discrimination.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=103#oembed-1>

Related to positionality, intersectionality acknowledges the complex relationship between social identities, and systems of power and oppression. Given the fluid, relational, and social construction of identities, intersectional paradigms recognize that every person has multiple and diverse identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, dis/ability, beliefs, and worldview) that combine in unique ways to shape our perspectives, and experiences with oppression and privilege (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2001). In this context, intersectionality recognizes that oppression does not exist within a vacuum, but rather intersecting oppressions work together in producing injustice (Collins, 2001).

The following graphic entitled “Intersectionality” visually displays how social identities intersect with one another and are wrapped in systems of power. For example, using the imagery of a spirograph, Duckworth (2020) colour-codes various social identities including race, ethnicity, gender identity, class, language, religion, ability, sexuality, mental health, age, education, and body size.

INTERSECTIONAL



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see how different forms of discrimination come and collide, where it locks and intersects. It is an acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

— Kimberlé Crenshaw —

(Duckworth, 2020) [Image description \(Doc\)](#) ↓

Social Identities, Privilege and Oppression

Critical social psychology describes identity as a social construction that is learned through interactions with others and the world, and that has a strong impact on who we become (Allen & Rosatto, as cited in Shah, 2018). Social privilege exists on the basis of complex and intersecting social identities, such as race, gender, ability, class, faith/religion, age and sexuality and the relative distance of these identities to dominant identities and power (Black & Stone, as cited in Shah, 2018).

Wheel of Power/Privilege

Sylvia Duckworth's "wheel of power/privilege" is another visual representation of how power, privilege, and social identities intersect. The graphic below uses the imagery of a wheel, sectioned off by the following social identities and respective categories:

- Citizenship: citizen, documented, undocumented
- Skin colour: white, different shades, dark
- Formal education: post-secondary, high school, elementary
- Ability: able-bodied, some disability, significant disability
- Sexuality: heterosexual; gay men; lesbian, bi, pan, asexual
- Neurodiversity: neurotypical, neuroatypical, significant neurodivergence
- Mental health: robust, mostly stable, vulnerable
- Body size: slim, average, large
- Housing: owns property, sheltered/renting, homeless
- Wealth: rich, middle class, poor
- Language: English, Learned English, non-English monolingual
- Gender: cisgender man; cisgender woman; trans, intersex, nonbinary

WHEEL OF POWER/PRI



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

(Duckworth, 2020) [Image Description \(Doc\)](#) ↓

Activity 2: Define Yourself

In this topic, we hope you learned about yourself, your salient social identities, and how they interact with the systems of power and oppression in our society. To conclude, we invite you to think about your social location and the intersecting identities which shape your interactions within the higher education system. How are these similar and different to your colleagues, students, and administrators? How has academia epistemically favoured scholarship and ways of knowing of those with identities closer to the centre of power? Which social identities do the systems of power historically (and currently) serve?

Referring back to the identities in the Wheel of Power/Privilege think about how you define yourself, and where your salient social identities are located on the wheel. Get curious about:

- How close or far away from the centre are you?
- How does your level of power shift as you place yourself in different identity categories?
- Thinking about your institution, where do students, staff, administrators, and/or faculty reside?

You are invited to record your reflection in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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Shah, V. (2018). Leadership for social justice through the lens of self-identified, racially and other-privileged leaders. *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, 6(1). <https://journals.sfu.ca/jgcee/index.php/jgcee/article/view/168/399>

The University of British Columbia. (n.d.). Positionality & Intersectionality. <https://indigenousofbc.ca/classroom-climate/positionality-and-intersectionality/>

4.3: Uncovering Unconscious Bias

An unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias) is an implicit attitude, stereotype, motivation, or assumption that can occur without one's knowledge, control or intention. Unconscious bias is a result of our life experiences and affects all types of people. Examples of unconscious bias include gender bias, cultural bias, age bias, language, and institutional bias.

The following video, *Understanding unconscious bias* [2:59] by Royal Society (2015), gives an overview of unconscious bias.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=109#oembed-1>

Unconscious biases are important to recognize in instances when quality, relevance and competence are being evaluated (University of California San Francisco, n.d.).

Types of Unconscious Bias

A vast body of research on unconscious bias shows that there are approximately 150 different types of unconscious biases. Given the various kinds of unconscious biases, all of us must be aware of our own unconscious biases. There are four fundamental unconscious biases (Kelley, 2020):

Affinity Bias



(Icon made by Freepik,

www.flaticon.com)

Affinity bias (also known as the similarity bias) is when people like people who are perceived to be just like them. Any perceived connection, however big or small, can result in an affinity bias. Affinity bias is fertile ground for the exclusion of people. Our natural instinct to gravitate towards people who are like us. But making decisions solely on someone who is like ourself can cause tunnel vision.

The PwC (2017) video, *Blind spots: Broaden perspectives* [3:24], discusses similarity bias and how to overcome it.

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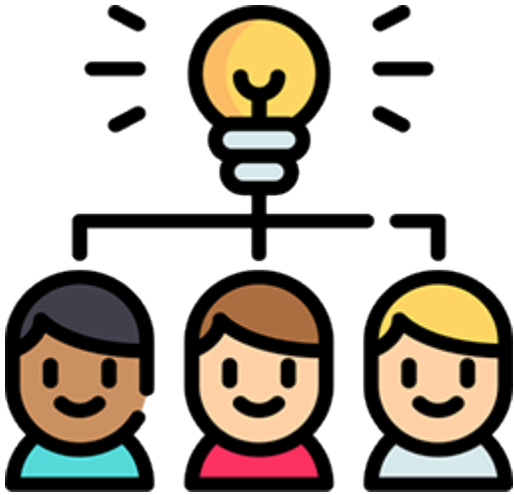
Confirmation Bias



(Icon made by
Freepik, www.flaticon.com)

Confirmation biases are realized when people attempt to prove assumptions and stereotypes. Confirmation bias impacts the organizational culture since people seek to confirm their beliefs or stereotypes in their interactions. Confirmation bias can affect assignments to work teams, and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. People who exhibit confirmation bias do so after learning some aspect about a person or group and will then unconsciously seek confirmation or search for evidence to prove their assumptions. Remote learning can exacerbate confirmation bias since there is less opportunity to get to know people due to limited contact, whereas people will spend time confirming instead of getting to know someone.

Groupthink or Conformity Bias



(Icon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com)

Groupthink is a type of unconscious bias where people want to achieve group consensus. People will adopt the thoughts and opinions of the group while setting aside their personal beliefs and values. Groupthink is present in many aspects but is mostly found to occur during decision-making processes. The most damaging effect of groupthink is the pressure on group members to conform to the group and form a consensus that results in the exclusion of other ideas, perspectives, talents, skills, and thoughts. Remote collaboration requires a diversity of thought, experiences, and backgrounds.

Perception Bias



(Icons made by Freepik, www.flaticon.com)

Perception bias is when people form generalized stereotypes and assumptions about particular groups of people. This type of bias renders it virtually impossible for people with this bias to remain objective when considering an individual in any aspect of the learning environment. Perception bias is present when a person focuses on irrelevant factors about someone they are perceiving (such as their gender, ethnicity, race, national origin, sexual orientation, etc.) and the stereotypes associated with each, rather than the qualifications and personality of the individual.

Conscious Bias

Conscious Bias (also known as explicit bias) refers to the prejudiced beliefs or attitudes one has towards a person or group on a conscious level. Explicit attitudes are feelings and thoughts that one deliberately believes and can consciously document.

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination are well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. One's age, gender, gender identity, physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics are subject to bias.

Addressing and Combating Bias

The Devex (2018) video, *4 steps for busting unconscious bias* [4:26], details a step-by-step guide for recognizing and responding to our own unconscious biases.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=109#oembed-3>

The Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.) at DePaul University provides some strategies for combating bias in teaching:

- Consider using grading and assessment techniques that may help mitigate bias
- Diversify curriculum which may help to counter stereotypes
- Facilitate equitable participation during class activities and discussions
- Ask for feedback from peers by asking a colleague to observe your course

You may read the detailed strategies from [Implicit Bias](#).

Activity 3: Identify Biases

1. Take the [Project Implicit](#) online self-assessment by Harvard University to identify your individual biases.
2. Review the examples below and self-reflect on lived experiences related to your own biases:
 - Instructors may assume that certain students know to seek help when they are struggling, although students at higher risk for struggling academically are often less likely to seek help and support.
 - Instructors may assume that students from certain backgrounds or social groups have differing intellectual abilities and/or ambitions. For example, an instructor might assume that a student from a certain background will be satisfied with lower achievement levels.
 - Instructors may expect students who speak with certain accents to be poor writers.
 - Instructors may stereotype students with substandard writing abilities as lacking intellectual ability.
 - Instructors might treat students with physical disabilities as if they may also have mental disabilities, and thus require more attention.
 - Instructors may treat students who are affiliated with a particular identity group as experts on issues related to that group.
 - Instructors may assume that students will best relate to the historical, contemporary, or fictional character who resembles them demographically.

- Instructors may expect students of certain groups to have certain participation styles (quiet, argumentative, agenda-oriented).
-

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4.4: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: Workshop Planning

Imagine you are planning to teach a one-hour lesson or workshop.

1. Download and read the [Key Guiding Questions \(Word Doc\)](#) ↓ to consider how you would incorporate EDI when designing, developing, and delivering your lesson or workshop.
2. What questions would you consider in order to apply UDL principles to incorporate equity,

diversity, inclusion, and accessibility?

You are invited to record your response in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=112#h5p-2>

Resources

The following are some resources to deepen your learning about EDI in post-secondary education:

- The [Inclusive Design Guide](#) was created by the community members of the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University. This documentation is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY 3.0](#) and provides content regarding:
 - Recognize Diversity and Uniqueness
 - Inclusive Process and Tools
 - Broader Beneficial Impact
- The Government of Ontario [Inclusive Design Cards](#) are ideal to use early in the curriculum design process to help you sketch, plan, prototype and design inclusive, equitable and accessible content, interactions and processes.
- In their video, Dr. Yolanda Flores Niemann and Carla LynDale Carter share their experience and some examples of [Microaggressions in the Classroom](#).
- Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo, provides various tips about applying Universal Design in teaching:
 - [Inclusive Instructional Practices](#)
 - [Gender Pronouns and Teaching](#)
 - [Universal Design: Course Design](#)
 - [Universal Design: Instructional Strategies](#)

5.1: The Importance of Place and Space

Land-Based Education

One of the most fundamental and basic principles of Indigenous pedagogies is interconnectedness to the land. The land is essentially inseparable from all learning, all elements of life, and embedded in spirit—hence the significance of the term—Mother Earth.

Some Indigenous languages also reflect this, which is one of the reasons why it is so tragic that so much loss of language has occurred from the effects of colonization. The English language is immersed and positioned around the use of nouns and possessiveness.

Robin Wall Kimmerer (a botanist, Professor and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation), shares a particularly striking passage in her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, that helps to illustrate this interconnectedness that doesn't exist within the English language. According to Dr. Kimmerer, approximately 30% of words in English are verbs and in Potawatami, that number rises to approximately 70% (2013, p. 53). This is significant as it indicates the concept of experiencing the world in Indigenous tradition, rather than possessing it, as in Western tradition.

“European languages often assign gender to nouns, but Potawatomi does not divide the world into masculine or feminine. Nouns and verbs are both animate and inanimate... In that moment I could smell the water of the bay, watch it rock against the shore and hear it sift onto the sand. A bay is a noun only if the water is dead. When bay is a noun, it is defined by humans, trapped between its shores and contained by the word. But the verb *wiikwegamaa* – to be a bay – releases the water from bondage and lets it live. “To be a bay” holds the wonder that, for this moment, the living water has decided to shelter itself between these shores, conversing with cedar roots and a flock of baby mergansers. Because it could do otherwise – become a stream or an ocean or a waterfall, and there are verbs for that, too. To be a hill, to be a sandy beach, to be a Saturday, all are possible verbs in a world where everything is alive. Water, land, and even a day, the language a mirror for seeing the animacy of the world, the life that pulses through all things, through pines and nuthatches and mushrooms. This is the language I hear in the woods; this is the language that lets us speak of what wells up all around us. And the vestiges of boarding schools, the soap-wielding missionary wraiths, hang their heads in defeat” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 55).



(© Lorna Stolarchuk) Jaimie Kehego at Little River Corridor Pond talking with North, the Swan, as she seeks to connect with her.

Watch [The Importance of Land-Based Education](#) [5:28] video to see an example of land-based lessons at the Black Oak Heritage Park.

Place-Based Education

Indigenous pedagogies connect learning to a specific place, and thus knowledge is situated in relationship to a location, experience, and group of people. For curriculum developers, this means creating opportunities to learn about the local place and to learn in connection to the local place. The following [Importance of Place-based Learning](#) [2:06] video explains place-based learning at the site of

the [Nimkii Binesi Zaswaaning \(Thunderbird's Nest\)](#).

The Learning Lodge on the Chippewa on the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) is being prepared as a site to host Indigenous learning, healing, and ceremony for its members. Connecting with Indigenous communities in your area may offer opportunities for place-based learning in your curriculum.



(© Shreyas Tambe, 2021) Tipi Thunderbird Site of Nimkii Binesi Zaswaaning (Thunderbird's Nest).

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning plays a significant role in Indigenous pedagogies. It has been used with Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial to equip generations with the knowledge, values, skills, spiritual,

emotional, intellectual, and physical competencies needed to survive and thrive.



(© Jaimie Kechego)

One contemporary view on experiential learning was undertaken by the University of Toronto when they developed a whitepaper exploring experiential learning as a strategic approach to enhance student learning while contributing to the larger community and societal needs. This view recognizes the value of holistic and multi-modal learning in addition to interacting with the learner’s environment.

From the whitepaper, the following was used to help refine an experiential learning definition drawing upon many western influential researchers including Kolb, Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget (University of Toronto, 2017):

Six Core Tenets of Experiential Learning Theory

Drawing on David A. Kolb’s (1984) theory, experiential learning is understood to be “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). Building upon earlier theories on learning through experience (Dewey, 1938; Lewin, 1951; Piaget, 1978), Kolb’s experiential

learning theory (ELT) is founded on six core tenets (Kolb & Kolb, 2005):

1. Learning is a process.
2. Learning is grounded in experience.
3. Learning involves mastery of all four learning modes.
4. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation.
5. Learning occurs when an individual interacts with their environment.
6. Knowledge is created through learning.

Dr. Marie Battiste (2002) summarizes an Indigenous approach to experiential learning, with links to UDL.

“The first principle of Aboriginal learning is a preference for experiential knowledge. Indigenous pedagogy values a person’s ability to learn independently by observing, listening, and participating with a minimum of intervention or instruction. This pattern of direct learning by seeing and doing, without asking questions, makes Aboriginal children diverse learners.” (2002, p. 15).

Dr. Battiste continues by stating that educators “...need to recognize that they must use a variety of styles of participation and information exchanges, adapt their teaching methods to the Indigenous styles of learning that exist, and avoid over-generalizing Aboriginal students’ capacities based on generalized perceived cultural differences. To maximize participation of Aboriginal students in the educational process, teachers need to experiment with teaching opportunities to connect with the multiple ways of knowing these students have and multiple intelligences” (2002, p. 15).

Post-secondary educators should consider how integrating experiential learning opportunities in their teaching may enhance learning for all of their students.

Activity 1: Self-Directed Activities for Your Discipline

Research your institution’s connection to the treaty (if one exists) for your area and prepare your own land-acknowledgement based on what you have learned. See [Native Land Digital](#) (opens in a new tab) for an interactive map on treaties, language and territories, information on territory acknowledgements and more.

You are invited to record your land-acknowledgement in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain entirely confidential and visible only to you.** Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don’t lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=120#h5p-2>

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2

5.2: The Importance of Indigenous Foundations

Storytelling and Oral Tradition

“As the young asked, the old men and the old women thought about these matters. They gave their answers and explanations in the form of stories, songs, prayers, rituals and ceremonies.”

– Basil Johnston, 1976

Traditionally, Ojibway Elders often provided lessons and demonstrated expected behaviour through stories told in lodges during activities such as repairing fishing nets or hunting equipment, and when clothing and food were being prepared. Characters in the stories, including animals or other creatures in the natural world, often possessed spirits and needed to be passed along with accuracy, respect and sometimes permission to reshare with others. Listeners are often expected to come to their own interpretations and understandings, rather than views being imposed.

Stories are a pedagogical tool whereby meaning can be expressed, renegotiated, interpreted, or shared with learners. Stories help educators and learners make connections between complex issues and can be used as either primary or supplemental instructional materials. Accompanying stories with a hands-on activity approach, for example, models a traditional way of teaching used with many Indigenous peoples, and relates to the principles of UDL by providing an alternative way for students to engage in learning, and a different representation from typical written content.

In Indigenous cultures, stories are usually told by Elders or Knowledge Keepers who decide when a learner is ready for the knowledge. It is important not to assume that because a story has been shared with you, that it is appropriate for you to share it with others. It is wise to speak with members of the community or the Elders represented to know for sure (Archibald, n.d.) whether you can share the story in your own teaching. JoAnne Archibald suggests seven principles of Indigenous story work including

“respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, inter-relatedness, holism, and synergy” (Archibald, 2019).

We have tried to model elements of storytelling throughout this module. We encourage you to research and learn more about Indigenous Peoples stories from the nations in your local area, and your institutional Indigenous centre or advisory council, or Indigenous curriculum supports if you have them. These voices will be best positioned to advise how you can (or can't) use Indigenous stories in your teaching practices.

Medicine Wheel


The cycle of life through many dimensions can be captured and symbolized through the medicine wheel. Historically, medicine wheels may have taken the form of a stone circle with vertical and horizontal lines bisecting in the middle (Kemppainen et al., 2008).

A more recent rendition involves colouring of the quadrants and the colours may vary based on the community it represents. You might be familiar with one common presentation of the Medicine Wheel where the four quadrants are shown with white in the north quadrant, yellow in the east quadrant, red in the south quadrant, and black in the west quadrant. The centre is the intersection point that represents the individual balanced between these quadrants.



(Littlejohn657, 2021)

Talking or sharing circles are often used in Indigenous teaching and learning environments. Circles have traditionally been used to demonstrate that everyone is connected and that every person in the circle has an equal voice. They also ensure that everyone can see and hear the speaker, and turn-taking is important. It is a considerably different model to the traditional classroom with the instructor at the front with rows upon rows of students facing forward. The power differential is very different between these two learning environments as well, with the circle approach having parallels to Universal Design principles (can you think of which ones?) You may want to consider how you can include the circle approach in your teaching and what impact that might have on all your learners.

There are many, many teachings using the medicine wheel, and some are described in the [Four Directions Teachings](#)  interactive video website if you wish to learn more about the use of the Medicine Wheel in Indigenous pedagogy. The site features versions of the medicine wheel teachings from five Nations perspectives including: Mikmaq, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Cree and Blackfoot. We recommend you take some time to familiarise yourself with these resources and learnings and consider the relationship between your own teaching and the teachings shared in this.

Sacred, Secular and Spiritual

Sacred, secular and spiritual connectedness are at the root of Indigenous worldviews, events, and teachings. There are many traditions depending on the nations featured (there are over 600 nations in the land we now call Canada). Indigenous teachings and activities integrate deeper meaning beyond the obvious and connect to ancestors and the surrounding living world.

As post-secondary education in Ontario and across the country slowly starts to incorporate more Indigenous content in their programs, it is important for educators to understand the context of spirituality in Indigenous knowledges and worldviews and how these may be perceived by learners and non-Indigenous colleagues. This can be uncomfortable for many faculty and students who were trained in traditional Western educational settings, but it is critical that we engage respectfully and appropriately with these elements of Indigenous pedagogies. According to Hoffman,

“Aboriginal ontologies and epistemologies are rooted in worldviews that are inclusive of both the sacred and the secular. [In Indigenous ontologies] the world exists in one reality composed of an inseparable weave of secular and sacred dimensions” (2013, p. 190).

Pow Wows are just one example of events with deep interconnectedness involving ceremony, regalia, drums, music, food, dance, and celebration. They are intergenerational, practice spiritual healing and have etiquette and protocols to observe. Pow Wows are hosted across Turtle Island (the land we now call North America).




The Importance of Smudging

Smudging is another practice that involves burning of one or more of the sacred four medicines (sage, cedar, tobacco and sweet grass) while reflecting and engaging in reflective cleansing. Smudging begins by cleansing of the air, then the mind, eyes, ears and mouth to see, hear, and speak well of others. It also involves letting go of the negatives and is part of living a good life and welcomes cleansing of the spirit and emotions (Ontario Federation of Labour, 2019).

The following video, [The Importance of Smudging](#) [4:54], has a brief overview of what smudging is and what it means to Jaimie Kecheho.

The Learning Spirit

In the book “Aboriginal Learning: A Review of Current Metrics of Success,” Tunison (2007) explores the often-observed academic success gap in Aboriginal learners by identifying a crucial element which he calls the “Learning Spirit”. By redefining what success looks and feels like from the Indigenous learner perspective, post-secondary educators will become knowledgeable in how to support the learning spirit within the student.

The Mt. Elgin Industrial Institute – Indian Residential School Monument, erected in 2012, features seven stone pillars with each pillar containing names of children who attended the residential school. Children attended from all over Ontario and Michigan. Each of the seven pillars correspond to one of the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings. Read more about the memorial and its story from [The story of the Chippewas of the Thames Indian Residential School Monument](#)  webpage.

The video below [6:12] contains Jaimie’s story about the monument, [the importance of the learning spirit](#), and how it connects to herself, her family, and the residential school system.

Intergenerational and Relational Learning

Robin Wall Kimmerer in her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, mentions several teachings that have been handed down generation after generation. In her chapter, “Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass”, she discusses learning from Elder Lena about how to select one of the four sacred medicines – sweetgrass. Lena says,

“It’s our way,” she says, “to take only what we need. I’ve always been told that you never take more than half.” “Our teachings,” she says, “are very strong. They wouldn’t get handed on if they weren’t useful. The most important thing to remember is what my grandmother always said: ‘If we use a plant respectfully it will stay with us and flourish. If we ignore it, it will go away. If you don’t give it respect, it will leave us’” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 157).

This passage is striking as it embodies so many teachings that are passed down through oral history and Indigenous ways. Only the useful ones get passed down and have strength in the community. Relational learning (between humans and between all living beings) and intergenerational learning — that which is passed down between generations is foundational in Indigenous pedagogies.

The following video, [The Importance of Relationality and Intergenerational Learning](#) [6:32], explores ways of building strong relationships especially between the generations.

As a post-secondary educator, you may wish to engage Elders or Knowledge Keepers in events or consultations, to help you learn more about Indigenous pedagogies. The [Respecting and Working with Elders](#) [6:17] video shares some common-sense respectful approaches to consider in these engagements.




Activity 2: Reflection

Read a children’s book, out loud, and reflect on:

- The points you emphasize

- Why those points are important to you
- Why those points are important to the story
- Why those points may be important to the listener

Using one the stories provided below, do the same activity again:

- [Hodinohso:ni Art Lesson #9 – Corn Husk Dolls](#) 
- [The Ojibway creation story](#) 
- [Haudenosaunee creation story](#) 

What do you notice about how you read these stories? How might storytelling or oral history fit in your course/curriculum? How might oral storytelling form part of a UDL plan for your courses?

You are invited to record your reflection in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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3

5.3: Key Principles for Indigenous Pedagogies

First Peoples Principles of Learning

There are many elements to address regarding access to and permission to use Indigenous knowledge. The [First Nations Education Steering Committee \(FNESC\)](#) in British Columbia, with the input of Indigenous Elders, scholars and knowledge keepers, created the First Peoples Principles of Learning. While these principles are not exhaustive, they provide an informed approach to implementing Indigenous Pedagogies in post-secondary education in Ontario.

The nine principles are detailed below (First Nations Education Steering Committee, n.d.):

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

The following videos, [Key Principles with Indigenous Pedagogies – Part 1](#) [6:00] and [Key Principles with Indigenous Pedagogies – Part 2](#) [6:32], go into this information in more detail:

Personal and Holistic Pedagogies

According to Antoine et al. (2018), “the principle of holism is linked to that of relationality, as Indigenous thought focuses on the whole picture because everything within the picture is related and cannot be separated”.

Watch the video [The Importance of Personal and Holistic Learning](#) [7:09] where Jaimie shares her story in this respect.

Activity 3: Self Reflection

Reflect on the First Peoples Principles of Learning presented in this section and try to connect them to your teaching and/or learning experiences. Jot down answers to the following prompts:

- What commonalities have you noticed between these principles and your experience of post-secondary education in Ontario?
- Can you see overlaps between these principles and the [CAST UDL Guidelines \(website\)](#)?
- What differences are you able to see between how you were taught and how Indigenous Peoples may have experienced learning?
- What areas do you still need to explore further and why?
- How does this reflection activity make you feel?

You are invited to record your reflection in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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4

5.4: Connecting Indigenous Pedagogies to UDL

The UDL Guidelines directly relate to, and are supportive of, implementing Indigenous Pedagogies in post-secondary education in Ontario. Please review the UDL Guidelines below. Should you wish to learn more about UDL, please access the content in Module 1 and 2 of the UDL for IDEA project.

As indicated in Module 1 and 2 of this guide, the UDL Guidelines are based on three primary brain **networks**:

- Affective
- Recognition
- Strategic

Each network is then identified by a **principle**:

- Multiple means of engagement
- Multiple means of representation
- Multiple means of action and expression

Each principle contains **considerations** emphasizing elements to support learner agency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and access:

- For Multiple Means of Engagement
 - Design options for welcoming interests & identities
 - Design options for sustaining effort & persistence
 - Design options for emotional capacity
- For Multiple Means of Representation
 - Design options for perception
 - Design options for language & symbols
 - Design options for building knowledge
- For Multiple Means of Action & Expression
 - Design options for interaction
 - Design options for expression & communication
 - Design options for strategy development

There is a strong connection between Indigenous Pedagogies and UDL. Below you will find a variety of examples, organized by UDL network, outlining how Indigenous Pedagogies can work in conjunction with UDL.

Indigenous Pedagogies Suggestions for Multiple Means of Engagement

- Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence by using the Medicine Wheel structure to illustrate the cycle of goals and support learners to divide long-term course or assignment goals into smaller short-term objectives.
- Provide options for self-regulation by referring to the Indigenous principle of responsibility for self and have learners reframe course objectives into their own personal learning outcomes.
- Provide options for recruiting interest by employing Place-based learning and creating assessment or learning activities that ask learners to engage with a “real” audience and have a clear real-world purpose.

Indigenous Pedagogies Suggestions for Multiple Means of Representation

- Provide options for language by pre-teaching important vocabulary and abbreviations in ways that connect to prior knowledge to support relational learning.
 - Consider researching terms from your discipline to see if there are corresponding terms

in an Indigenous languages or similar concepts. Connecting with your local Indigenous community may support you to explore further.

- Provide options to improve learning by including multimedia resources and experiential opportunities to support storytelling and experiential learning wherever possible.
 - In addition, should you wish to include Indigenous knowledge in your content, look for to openly available and authentic Indigenous sources and resources that connect to your discipline and your local area.

Indigenous Pedagogies Suggestions for Multiple Means of Action and Expression

- Design your learning environment with options for physical action by embedding experiential learning opportunities within your content.
- Provide options for personalized expression and communication by creating opportunities for learners to communicate their knowledge in a variety of formats where appropriate and relevant. Include space in your content, learning activities, and assessment activities for storytelling.
- Develop executive functioning by using the Medicine Wheel process to encourage reflection and self-monitoring of a learner's whole being, encouraging them to observe their own learning progress and growth.

Activity 4: Application

Thinking of your own discipline area:

1. Choose an Indigenous Pedagogy or Learning Principle that really spoke to you in this module.
2. Reflecting on your discipline, take one of the UDL considerations and determine how you could employ an element of Indigenous Pedagogies to provide options to all of your learners?

You are invited to record your application in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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Mohawk College. (2025). Universal Design for Learning [Graphic]. <http://www.mohawkcollege.ca/employees/centre-for-teaching-learning/universal-design-for-learning>

5.5: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: Summarize, Define and Emphasize

Now that you have had an introduction to Indigenous pedagogies, reflect on the following questions:

- Which Indigenous Pedagogies do you feel you could successfully implement in your own context?
- How will UDL support your inclusion of Indigenous Pedagogies?
- What supports and/or processes would you need to effectively implement Indigenous Pedagogies in your content? Who can you talk to at your institution to get that support?

You are invited to record your notes in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to document your ideas and refine them at the end of this module.

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Further Learning

- BC Campus has developed and hosts several excellent open books as part of their series: [Indigenization Guides \(website\)](#).
- eCampus Ontario's [Open Library \(website\)](#) also has several books that support Indigenization of curriculum that will help you learn more about many important Indigenous topics. These books will introduce you to the concepts of Indigenizing the curriculum, Indigenous Pedagogies, Indigenous Epistemologies, leadership, and decolonization. They are primarily focused on these topics through a lens of western Canadian First Nations, but they still provide useful starting points for Ontario-based educators.
- Residential Schools have had a profound effect on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Learn more about this topic through resources such as the open resource [Healing and Reconciliation Through Education \(eBook\)](#), which focuses on the history of the Shingwauk Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie.
- For more information on UDL and Indigenous pedagogies, resources such as the [Three-Block Model used by Edmonton Public Schools \(website\)](#) (based on Jennifer Katz' work) and Krista James' article on [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) as a Structure for Culturally Responsive Practice\(PDF\)](#) will help to expand your knowledge in the connection between UDL and Indigenous Pedagogies.

6.1: Review of Universal Design for Learning

Think back to how you defined Universal Design for Learning in Module 1: Introduction and Overview of UDL. If you opted to write your definition down, take a moment to review it now before continuing onto review the UDL Guidelines:

UDL G

Affective Networks

Recogniti

The **why** of learning

The **wha**

Design Multiple Means of Engagement

**Design Mu
Repres**

Design options for **welcoming interests & identities**

Design options for **sustaining effort & persistence**

Design options for **emotional capacity**

Design options for **perception**

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If you did not have an opportunity to complete Module 1 you can get a quick overview of how the UDL

Guidelines are structured, and how they apply to post-secondary education by watching Mohawk College's video, *What is UDL?* [3:34] (2025).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=137>

[\(Mohawk College, 2025\) Video Transcript \(PDF\)](#) ↓

Every decision we make, as educators, includes unconscious bias. UDL helps us to provide options so we can limit, or avoid, imposing our biases on learners and support their learning journey with increased self-determination.

A primary goal of UDL implementation in post-secondary education in Ontario is to create more equitable, inclusive and accessible learning environments for all students. To learn more about unconscious bias, you are invited to review Module 4.3 Uncovering Unconscious Bias as well as the resources section at the end of this module.

Activity 1: Case Studies

Choose one of the three case studies and examine the following questions:

1. What are the barriers for educators and learners?
2. Where did each barrier originate (e.g., systemic, student, course design, etc.)?
3. What is the impact of each barrier on each stakeholder (e.g., learners, educators, the institution, etc.)?
4. How might UDL reduce or eliminate each barrier?

Case Study 1

An international student is hoping to take a classics course. However, as they are reviewing the course description and assessment methods, they notice that the majority of their grade will rely on oral communication like presentations, class discussions and participation, as well as a debate activity. The learner's written communication skills are very strong, and they have been successful in a variety of other courses, thus far. However, they are less confident regarding their verbal expression as their first language is not English. They are passionate about history, feel they could do very well in the course and are excited to learn, but the format of the course gives them pause.

Case Study 2

An Indigenous student is in her first year of a Teacher Education program. She is living in residence, has made a number of new friends, participates in intramural volleyball, and is progressing well in all of her first-year courses. While she has created community outside of the classroom, she does not feel connected to much of the course content or assigned readings. Her professor appears to be a supportive educator, and they have discussed this issue. However, the faculty member does not feel comfortable or qualified to add Indigenous elements to the curriculum, and the institution has few services to support the professor.

Case Study 3

Every semester, employees in the Financial Assistance Department (FAD) field hundreds of emails and phone calls from frustrated parents and students struggling to navigate post-secondary financial support systems. A group of educators in the FAD are preparing to deliver an introductory session to prospective students on how to apply for financial assistance. They wish to let students know about the options that exist (like the Ontario Student Assistance Program, bursaries, scholarships, etc.), how to apply for each option, what the timelines are and where to go for help if needed. The content is dry, there are many complicated steps, and there is a significant amount of information.

You are invited to record your responses in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=137#h5p-2>

References

Mohawk College. (2025). *UDL with CTLI* [Video]. Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation. <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/centre-for-teaching-learning-innovation/teaching-resources/universal-design-for-learning#universal-design-for-learning>

Mohawk College. (2025). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines* [Infographic]. <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/centre-for-teaching-learning-innovation/teaching-resources/universal-design-for-learning#universal-design-for-learning>

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6.2: UDL for AODA

Educators can often feel overwhelmed trying to ensure that their course content and activities are AODA compliant. Institutions place a great deal of focus on the need for accessible learning environments, but may not offer the support required to equip educators to create those spaces. In addition, because AODA is provincial legislation, educators can feel that there will be punitive consequences if they are unable to execute applicable elements of AODA perfectly.

The role of UDL for AODA is not to replace the need for disability related accommodations or

circumvent this important Act. Instead, UDL implementation can be used as a tool to help educators get closer to a more inclusive and accessible course.

Let's have a look at some examples of how UDL can support common AODA and accommodation requests.

Note Taking

Note taking is a common disability related accommodation in post-secondary education. It is also a labour and time intensive accommodation that can include learner disclosure, educator involvement to find a note taker, implementation of new technologies, and/or arranging physical services that are not consistently available.

Alternatively, implementing UDL can proactively build note taking support into a course to support all learners, including those with disabilities. For example educators can:

- Post their notes to the course site in advance of class
- Offer lesson guides prior to each class and then provide completed notes after class
- Record their lectures and post them to the course site with the transcript
- Implement crowdsourcing of lecture notes where learners take their notes as they usually would and then upload their personal notes to the course site

Additional Time for Quizzes, Tests and/or Exams

At many post-secondary institutions in Ontario, the most common testing accommodation for learners with disabilities is additional time for quizzes, tests and/or exams. The accommodation is common, but the process for gaining the accommodation can be lengthy and can result in the learner writing in a different space or time than the rest of the class, making it challenging to ask questions of educators and gain prompt responses.

Proactively including additional time for learners to complete quizzes, tests, and/or exams allows the time students with accommodations require, while supporting all students to read the questions and their answers more carefully, reduce anxiety related to time, and create a more supportive evaluation process. While this UDL element may not be ideal in all testing situations, educators can determine which assessments would be best suited to having additional time proactively included.

To learn more about this UDL element and how to implement it, please visit Mohawk College's [Additional Time for Quizzes/Tests/Exams](#) webpage.

Alternate Formats

All learners should be able to access their course content. However, when the accessibility of materials and resources is not already considered, the process for students with disabilities to gain alternate formats can take weeks. During this time, learners can fall behind the class and miss important opportunities to review and study content.

Proactively providing content options for all learners in a course can ensure that many students who

have specific need for alternate formats have quick and easy access, while providing supportive learning options for everyone. An aim of UDL is to support learners to gain content in the way that is best for them and proactively ensuring alternate formats are present in a course is key.

There are a few practical options to provide alternate formats of course materials and resources:

- Provide content in the HTML editor and a link to Word versions, and/or PDF
- Select textbooks that have physical and accessible e-versions
- Include PowerPoint presentations with PDF versions
- Offer captioned videos posted with a transcript

The suggestions above are not exhaustive and may not replace all AODA or specific accommodations in all instances, but offer some suggestions of how UDL can remove the artificial learning barriers post-secondary environments can create for students with disabilities.

The following video, *UDL at Landmark College* [1:07] by UDL on Campus (2015), offers a view of institution wide UDL implementation in support of learners with disabilities and provides a vision of how UDL can remove post-secondary learning barriers.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=139#oembed-1>

Activity 2: Case Study and Brainstorming

In post-secondary education, challenges with AODA can result from an assumption that anyone can engage in the course material and tools with the same abilities. Thinking back to the case studies from Activity 1, consider the following questions related to accessibility for persons with disabilities:

1. What functional abilities (physical, cognitive, psychological, behavioural) are required in order to fully engage in the course?
2. Are the educational materials and tools you use compatible with adaptive technology?
3. If it will require time to convert your materials or instruction into an accessible format, how will this impact the student's learning while they wait?
4. What supports are available at your institution to support you in creating accessible educational content?
5. Brainstorm all of the different ways UDL can address the most challenging or most common AODA concerns for teaching and learning in post-secondary environments.

If you are not sure how UDL might support AODA, the content and learning activities from Module 1, 2 and 3 will be useful.

You are invited to brainstorm in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

Alternatively, a text-based note-taking space is provided below. **Any notes you take here remain**

entirely confidential and visible only to you. Use this space as you wish to keep track of your thoughts, learning, and activity responses. Download a text copy of your notes before moving on to the next page of the module to ensure you don't lose any of your work!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=139#h5p-2>

References

UDL on Campus. (2015, Oct 7). UDL at Landmark College [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/IMzQR09qXAE>

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6.3: UDL for EDI

In post-secondary education, challenges related to EDI can result from assumptions related to unconscious bias and lack of recognition of positionality, and how an individual's multiple identities intersect to form privilege and oppression.

When policies, processes, and instruction are developed without examining these fundamental components of EDI, systemic barriers and inequities can result. An objective of UDL is to reduce or eliminate learning barriers for all learners, so that students can gain knowledge the best way they can and then demonstrate that knowledge the best way they can.

The UDL on Campus (2015) video, *Innovations at the Margins* [1:07], outlines how UDL has the capacity to support all post-secondary students to become masterful learners who are fully included in all aspects of post-secondary education.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign2/?p=141#oembed-1>

Here are some examples of how UDL can support EDI in our post-secondary context:

Develop Content for Inclusion

Applying UDL starts when you begin to design and develop your content. Designing and developing for inclusion means asking yourself: "Who am I designing for? Who will see themselves in the materials I've selected for this course? Who will feel included? Do my teaching materials feature certain groups to the exclusion of other groups?" Here are some UDL tips for designing and developing for inclusion:

- Create content and select images and videos that show diversity in gender, race, skin colour, body size, abilities and other attributes.
- Avoid images and descriptions of people and groups that foster stereotypes (e.g., images depicting the concept of a family, poverty, disability)

- Include content warnings for potentially sensitive or offensive content.

Use Instructional Strategies that Value Diversity

Applying UDL principles to instructional strategies supports diversity by recognizing that there are multiple ways of learning and there are multiple ways of knowing. Here are some UDL tips for teaching that supports diversity:

- Include captions and transcripts in all media, recognizing that these learning supports are widely used by students with and without disabilities, in a variety of ways.
- Acknowledge any biases reflected in course content; for example, is the research and scholarship founded on dominant worldviews? Are other ways of knowing recognized, even if they are not taught?
- Check your assumptions about technological resources (e.g., bandwidth) available to students
- Provide opportunities for varied learning styles by using mixed-methods evaluations (choice of presentations, research papers, exams, etc. to meet the same learning outcomes, when possible).

Provide Assessments and Feedback that Value Equity

Applying UDL in assessments includes not only developing assessments that are equitable, it also means grading and providing feedback in ways that value equity. The following UDL tips support equity in designing and grading assessments:

- Consider potential biases and barriers to participation when creating assignment and assessment instructions.
- When possible, prompt students to consider how their positionality shapes the way they approach the topic under study.
- When possible, grade anonymously to eliminate the influence of unconscious bias.
- Use inclusive language when providing feedback on assessments.

For other examples, read this [Key Guiding Questions \(Doc\)](#) ↓

Activity 3: Case Study and Brainstorming

In the case studies presented in this Activity 1 of this module, there are a few indicators of unconscious bias at work – can you spot them? As well, we invite you to consider these questions related to EDI:

1. What are the essential requirements of the course?
2. Where is there flexibility in how essential requirements are demonstrated? Is there, for example, an alternative pathway for a learner who has strong written communication skills vs. oral language skills?
3. What are the potential assumptions that instructors might be making about students? How might these assumptions hinder student success?
4. What practices can instructors use to disrupt unconscious bias, for example, that contributes to systemic barriers?
5. How can instructors prompt students to examine their unconscious biases and positionality in relation to the course content?

6. What campus resources can the instructors turn to for support?
7. Brainstorm all of the different ways UDL can address the most challenging or most common EDI concerns for teaching and learning in post-secondary environments.

If you are not sure how UDL might support EDI, the content and learning activities from Module 1, 2 and 4 will be useful.

You are invited to brainstorm in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

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References

UDL on Campus. (2015, Oct 6). Innovation at the Margins [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/4yUYQgcWGGA>

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6.4: UDL for Indigenous Pedagogies

Indigenous Pedagogies have been used on Turtle Island (North America) to teach and transfer knowledge since time immemorial. A quick summary of the First Peoples Principles of Learning, offered by the First Nations Education Steering Committee in BC, touches on many of the topics identified in the Indigenous pedagogies module.

Given that Universal Design for Learning is about approaches to teaching and learning equitably, the following 9 principles “ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors” (First Nations Education Steering Committee, n.d.).

1. Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors.
2. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships and a sense of place).
3. Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
4. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
5. Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
6. Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.

7. Learning involves patience and time.
8. Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
9. Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Download a PDF copy of these principles from the [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#) website.

Wherever possible, these principles should be considered and adapted when helping to create a climate of inclusiveness for all students in a classroom, but in particular, for First Nations, Métis or Inuit students.

Utilizing UDL Principles

The goal of UDL is to support learners to become masterful learners in the way that meets their learning goals and needs. As stated in section 6.1, "Every decision we make, as educators, includes unconscious bias." UDL implementation helps educators to create space for indigenous pedagogies in their content, while also helping to support the innate needs and self-determination of all learners, with appropriate emphasis on the needs of Indigenous students.

Circling back to case study 2 mentioned in 6.1, there are two perspectives that should be examined. To begin with, the student who is far from home and does not feel a connection with the course or assigned readings may utilize UDL by using action and expression. This student could benefit from using multimedia to seek out various forms of Indigenous course content. For example: Isaac Murdoch, Storyteller on YouTube.

The faculty member who is experiencing discomfort about their own qualifications to teach Indigenous elements could use UDL engagement to begin building competency with Indigenous knowledges. By using engagement with Indigenous knowledge holders, faculty will have practiced representation, action, and expression guidelines but with a focus on Indigenous knowledges and community which in turn will help the Indigenous student experience learner success.

The professor can increase their own awareness of other supports that do not operate at the institutional level by seeking out post-secondary institutions (the local college may have resources and support) for advice or reaching out to other organizations. Organizations such as [Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres \(OFIFC\)](#) offer great programming, resources and support with the general public who feel the same way as the professor. Educators can get started by observing what other post-secondary institutes including colleges are doing as well as boards of education (they usually have an Indigenous consultant for Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies).

OFIFC would be able to provide support to the professor by possibly offering programming in order for the professor to feel comfortable and confident to introduce Indigenous elements to the course. For example: writing a respectful land acknowledgement would consist of learning about the land that the institution is situated on and how that history came to be.

OFIFC would also be able to help the professor seek out and invite an Indigenous knowledge holder to guest teach. For example: teachings about the medicine wheel would require an Indigenous knowledge holder because those teachings are so vast, broad and each First Nation would have a different version of the teachings according to geographical location.

Building reciprocal relationships with organizations such as Indigenous student centres, Friendship centres, other post secondary institutes (colleges) and Indigenous communities will provide what the professor needs so that when this scenario happens again, they will be prepared with authentic resources and support.

Other common Indigenous education related challenges related to resources that the professor should be aware of include: access to transportation, access to affordable texts, access to reliable technology and access to safe spaces.

Colonialism and the Indian Act have created systemic barriers that continually ignore Indigenous knowledge and voices. To combat systemic barriers, professors can implement UDL Guidelines to provide options to learners to reduce barriers and support a more holistic learning environment. For example, assessment submission options that allow for storytelling, deliberate opportunities for reflection throughout content, consistent space to engage previous personal and generational knowledge. Educators can also hold their institutions accountable by actively engaging the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) and becoming an ally of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge.

A Word of Advice:

The professor should never ask an Indigenous student to do this work. It is not the student's responsibility to educate the professor!

Activity4: Brainstorming

Universal design is about learning that supports the learner equally. Brainstorm all of the different ways UDL can support the 9 learning principles specific to First Peoples offered at the beginning of this section.

For example, if Indigenous students cannot see themselves reflected back in the course or content whether it's through the course content or in their educational institutions, their ability to learn and experience success equally is affected. Indigenous principles on Indigenous education address this in principle 2, "learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)."

You are invited to brainstorm in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

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References

First Nations Education Steering Committee. (n.d.). First peoples principles of learning. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <http://www.fnesc.ca/first-peoples-principles-of-learning/>

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6.5: Goal Setting

Goal setting is an essential step in the UDL implementation process. While “goals help us focus our energy and actions, measure our progress and...achieve purposeful results” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 1), it is not always easy for post-secondary educators to determine institutional IDEA priorities or uncover entrenched systemic challenges that can inform goals.

Furthermore, institutional EDI, accessibility or Indigenization goals may not fully meet your learning and teaching environments needs. Careful review of your teaching and a proactive evaluation of your learners’ needs, in combination with institutional strategic plans and goals, will provide an informed start to your UDL goal setting.



SMART goals are ideal when you wish to create comprehensive objectives that can be actualized. For those new to SMART goals, you will find a description of the acronym below:

- **Specific:** What, exactly, do you wish to accomplish?
- **Measurable:** How will you know when you have reached your goal?
- **Attainable:** Is your goal possible? What actions or supports will be required to reach your goal?
- **Relevant:** How does this goal align with needs (which can be your needs, the needs of your learners, the needs of your institution, etc.)?
- **Time-bound:** When are you planning to reach your goal? What is the timeline for your goal?

“If inclusion has happened in one classroom, anywhere in the world, then it is not a dream. It’s possible, and it is a matter of choice.”

– Jody Carr, former Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick
(as cited in Katz, 2012)

As post-secondary educators in Ontario, we need to not only choose inclusion, equity and access for our diverse student populations, but plan for it. Comprehensive goal setting is an ideal way to start your UDL implementation to support removing barriers for yourself and learners. The following learning activity will start you on your goal setting path.

Activity 5: Goal Setting

Identify a current issue or challenge in your post-secondary context relating to AODA, EDI and/or Indigenous Pedagogies. Develop a SMART goal(s) focused on improving or resolving the issue. The learning activities in Modules 3, 4 and 5 may be useful for this activity. You may wish to copy and paste the headings below to begin your notes:

Issue/Challenge:

Relation to AODA/EDI/Indigenous Pedagogies:

Specific – My goal is:

Measurable – My goal will be reached when:

Attainable – To realize my goal I will need:

Relevant – My goal is applicable because:

Time-bound – My goal will be completed by:

You are invited to record your goal(s) in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

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References

Katz, J. (2012). Teaching to diversity: The three-block module of universal design for learning. Portage & Main Press

Ministry of Education. (2013). Ideas into action for school and system leaders: Bulletin – 2013 No:04. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/ideasintoactionbulletin4.pdf>

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6.6: Assessment and Resources

Module Activity: Goal Refinement

Take the goals you developed in Activity 5 of this module and refine them to include how UDL can be applied to obtain the desired outcome. Learning activities in previous modules may be useful for your goal development and refinement.

Then create a plan for how you will use UDL to realize your goal(s). As part of your planning, you may wish to include:

- An explicit reason why the goal is necessary and required in your context
- UDL principles and implementation required
- A timeline for goal development, implementation and reflection
- Research or resources required
- Support needed
- Planned and hopeful outcomes

You are invited to record your goal(s) in the way that works best for you, which may include writing, drawing, creating an audio or video file, mind map or any other method that will allow you to reflect and refer back to your thoughts.

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Further Learning

The following are some resources to deepen your learning about how UDL can support AODA and EDI initiatives:

- To learn more about unconscious bias, review the University of Windsor's [Unconscious Bias Training](#) and take Harvard's [Implicit Association Test](#)
- [Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success](#), by Andratesha Fritzgerald, is an excellent resource to delve deeper into the impacts of racism in education and what is required of educators to eradicate the oppressive systems and practices that harm learners.