

Getting Started with UDL

This guide walks you through easy, actionable steps to begin integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into your course. Start with Accessibility, as it lays the foundation for an inclusive learning experience, then move to the UDL core principles.

Step 1 Ensure Accessibility

1. Check Digital Materials for Screen Reader Compatibility:

- Use accessibility checkers in software like Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or your Learning Management System (LMS).
- Ensure documents are properly structured with headings and use lists for clarity.

2. Add Captions and Transcripts to Multimedia:

- Enable automatic captions on videos (e.g., YouTube, Zoom, or Panopto).
- Provide a transcript for audio content.

3. Use High-Contrast Text and Accessible Fonts:

- Choose high-contrast color schemes (e.g., black text on a white background).
- Use sans-serif fonts (like Arial or Verdana) for readability.

4. Add Alternative Text (Alt Text) for Images:

- Write short, descriptive phrases for images used in slides, documents, or online content.

5. Test Your Course:

- Preview materials with assistive technologies like screen readers (e.g., NVDA, VoiceOver).
- Use free tools like WebAIM's color contrast checker to evaluate visuals.

Tip: Build your course materials with Blackboard Ally, an accessibility checker native to Blackboard. Ally will provide a step-by-step walkthrough for any accessibility errors it may find.



Engagement

Step 2 Engage Students by Offering Choices

1. Provide Options for Participation:

- Allow students to choose between discussion boards, group projects, or independent work.
- Offer flexible participation methods for in-person and online students.

2. Incorporate Real-Life Applications:

- Relate course content to real-world problems or professional scenarios.
- Use case studies or examples from current events.

3. Use Varied Instructional Methods:

- Mix lectures, group discussions, videos, and hands-on tasks.
- Incorporate polling tools or quizzes for active participation.



Representation

Step 3 Represent Content in Multiple Formats

1. Provide Key Information in Different Ways:

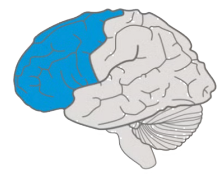
- Supplement lectures with slides, recordings, and written summaries.
- Use diagrams, charts, or infographics to explain complex ideas visually.

2. Ensure Visual and Audio Clarity:

- Use clear labels on charts and graphs.
- Avoid overly dense text on slides; focus on key points.

3. Support Language Comprehension:

- Define technical terms in a glossary.
- Offer translated materials or simplified summaries when possible.



Action and Expression

Step 4 Allow Flexible Ways to Show Understanding

1. Diversify Assignments:

- Let students choose their preferred format for projects (e.g., essay, video, or slide deck).
- Include low-stakes options like quizzes, reflections, or discussion posts to complement major assessments.

2. Set Clear Expectations:

- Use detailed rubrics to outline criteria for success, focusing on learning objectives rather than format.

3. Encourage Use of Tools:

- Suggest or allow tools like speech-to-text or graphic design apps to help students express ideas.