Many thanks to CAST and DO-IT; content shared using Creative Commons share-alike license.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides guidelines for developing curricula, selecting materials, and creating learning environments that take into account the wide variety of learners in higher education environments.

UDL is not a prescriptive checklist or formula with set methods and tools to be applied in every situation. The UDL framework is translational — a means for translating research and innovation into practice — providing guiding principles. From the principles, guidelines are derived for creating and choosing tools, methods, and practices, whose specifics depend upon context: learners' developmental levels, varied schools and communities, and the proclivities of teachers who are doing the teaching, among many other variables. UDL can help reshape teaching and learning by guiding the design of an entirely new system with flexibility at its core.

Additional Resources:
Email: accessibilitytaskforce@spu.edu with your universal design for learning related questions.
Visit the SPU UDL website: spu.edu/universaldesign
CAST UDL in higher education website http://udloncampus.cast.org/home
Universal Design in Higher Education From Principles to Practice, Second Edition Sheryl E. Burgstahler, foreword by Michael Young
Advising services are an important aspect of the educational experience. Advisors should be aware of unique issues of people with disabilities and other groups so that they can communicate effectively and provide sound advice as students plan their studies.

**Helpful Tips**

Communicate respectfully. Examples:
- Use people-first, positive language (e.g., “My student, Suzie has autism...” instead of “I have an autistic student, named Suzie...” or “a person who uses a wheelchair” not “a person confined to a wheelchair”).
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not through the person’s companion or interpreter.
- Ask before assuming a student needs mobility assistance.
- Ask before petting a service animal.

Accommodate variations in perception. Examples:
- While working in groups, raise hands, or use another agreed upon signal, to be recognized so that people with hearing impairments can know who is speaking.
- Face people with hearing impairments so they can see your lips; avoid chewing gum or eating when speaking.
- Speak clearly at a normal volume; speak louder only if requested.
- When guiding people with visual impairments, offer them your arm rather than touching them without permission.
- When interacting with people sitting in wheelchairs, sit or otherwise position yourself to be at the same approximate height.

Additional Resources:
The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework incorporates flexibility into the curriculum from the outset in order to avoid time-consuming retrofitting after the fact. Using UDL concepts, faculty members and instructional designers plan their curriculum in ways that reduce barriers to learning and facilitate meaningful participation by all students.

**Helpful Tips**

In class strategies:
- Use and recommend resources that reflect different reading levels, interests, and approaches to learning.
- Use essential questions in daily teaching that align with assessments and learning activities.
- Provide vocabulary lists (if this doesn’t interfere with the purpose of the exam/question).
- Employ adequate wait time when asking questions to allow for processing.
- Include multiple means of expression when possible. Examples:
  - Include both visual and auditory examples of important concepts.
  - Repeat and review key concepts in at least two different points within the course.
  - Explore content both individually and in groups (e.g., jigsaw, interest groups, expert groups, or think-pair-share groups).

Assessment strategies:
- Eliminate construct-irrelevant barriers (e.g., ensure that exams measuring math proficiency do not also test students’ reading comprehension and ability to work under pressure).
- Provide choices of tasks or modes of working to give students options for demonstrating proficiency (e.g., write an essay, create an infographic, or give a presentation to demonstrate knowledge).
- Allow for negotiable due dates/times for tasks.
- Encourage students to build support networks and use available resources, such as *The Center for Learning*, to manage their own learning effectively.

**Additional Resources:**
Universal Design for Learning also considers the physical, social, and intellectual classroom environment. Creating a warm, welcoming learning environment removes many barriers to learning. Communicating respect, articulating clear goals and expectations, and accounting for physical barriers ahead of time will enhance the campus environment for all members of the community.

**Helpful Tips**

Ensure that facilities, activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to, and usable by, all students for both in class and for required off campus activities (site visits, service projects etc.). Safety considerations should address all potential student characteristics. Examples:

- Develop lab safety procedures for all students, including those with visual, hearing, or mobility disabilities.
- Allow for multiple room arrangements; provide alternative seating in rooms with small or fixed desks.
- Give students the ability to choose where to sit or stand (e.g., students with PTSD may prefer to sit with their back to a wall; some students may need to stand for a portion of the class session).
- Cultivate an awareness of the room lighting (e.g., glare, low-light etc.).
- Be aware of barriers to get to the location (e.g., stairs, narrow doorways, narrow hallways, lack of access to private meeting space).

Adopt practices that reflect high values with respect to both diversity and inclusiveness, e.g., include a syllabi statement encouraging students to confidentially speak with the Disability Support Services office if they desire.

Cultivate a positive classroom climate. Examples:

- Build in time for students to introduce themselves.
- Create guidelines for classroom discussions and respectful debate, reinforce positive behavior.
- Consider “taking stack” or using another discussion facilitation technique to elevate the less dominant voices in a class.

Additional Resources:
- Use the “Report an accessibility” issue button that is on SPU websites to report an environmental barrier
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) https://askjan.org/media/educators.html#acc
Digital technologies that include UDL principles can enable easier and more effective customization of curricula for learners. Many of these technologies have built in supports, scaffolds and challenges to help learners understand, navigate, and engage with the learning environment. Effective instructors can be creative and resourceful in designing flexible learning environments that address the variability of learners using a range of high-tech and low-tech solutions.

Helpful Tips

Print and Document Design
- Use headings and other formatting tools available in MS Word and other text editors to format documents (use of headings is a machine readable way to emphasize text, while increasing font size or bolding are not).
- Choose fonts carefully. Examples:
  - Choose a sans serif font, such as Arial or Helvetica for your document. These fonts are easier to read for most people, but especially for those with low vision.
  - Make sure font sizes are large enough to read comfortably.
  - Limit the amount of text provided in graphics as text will not be machine readable.
- Provide good color contrast. Example:
  - Black text on a white or light background is the most readable. Patterns and images behind text make it more difficult to read.
- Use descriptive hyperlinks in electronic documents.
- Use Optical Character Recognition to make sure PDFs are accessible to a screen reader.

Video and audio enhancements
- Use captioned video and add captions to screencasts or recordings that you create.
- Add alternate text to images used in the Learning Management System (LMS), emails, and other electronic communications with students.
- Always do a test to check the quality of your audio when using recordings.
- Use an external microphone to enhance the quality of screencasts if necessary.

Other
- Consider using a tablet to control the class projector so you don’t have to turn your back to the class to write on the board.
- Consider sending students documents and slides ahead of time.
- Record your lectures and web conferences.
- Enable chat features and mic sharing in web conferences so that students have several options for communicating.
- Choose your texts and your assignment options early so that Disability Support Services (DSS) has time to complete any accommodations. It can take the DSS up to four weeks to convert some texts into tactile form.

Additional Resources:
Detailed instructions at spu.edu/univeraldesign
### Universal Design for Learning Guidelines: Theory and Practice Version

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#### The WHY
- **Self-Regulation**
  - Optimize motivation, facilitate coping skills, promote self-assessment and reflection

#### The WHAT
- **Comprehension**
  - Activate background knowledge, provide the big picture, maximize transferability

#### The HOW
- **Executive Functions**
  - Guide goal-setting, enhance strategy development and self-monitoring of progress

#### Persistence
- Vary challenges, foster collaboration, increase mastery-oriented feedback

#### Symbols
- Clarify vocabulary and symbols, support decoding text

#### Expression and Communication
- Use multiple media and tools, scaffold practice and performance

#### Interest
- Optimize choice, increase autonomy, maximize relevance, minimize distractions

#### Perception
- Customize displays, offer alternatives for auditory or visual information

#### Physical Action
- Vary methods for response, optimize assistive technologies

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