

# AN ERASMUSX GUIDE TO TEACHING WITH UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

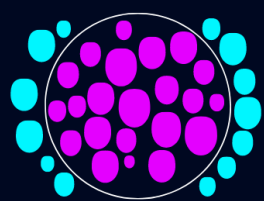
With Universal Design for Learning (UDL), we proactively lower barriers to learning by taking into accounts the diversity of needs that students bring with them, so that **all** students - including students with functional impairments\* - can access, develop and demonstrate learning. With this guide, let's begin our journey with UDL!



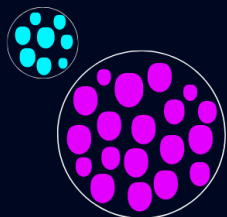
**Teachers** proactively design for variability and in doing so, decrease the need for interventions later on.



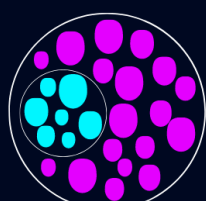
**Students** access a variety of resources and formats, advocate for their needs, make choices, and contribute feedback & ideas.



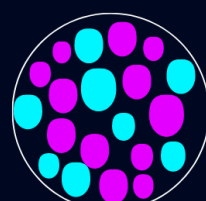
1. Exclusion



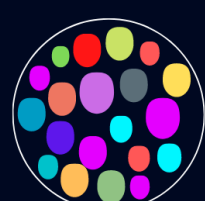
2. Segregation



3. Integration



4. Inclusion



5. Inclusion with Universal Design

Historically, students with functional impairments have been denied access to education, experiencing **exclusion (1)**, or were educated separately from their general education peers, experiencing **segregation (2)**.

Nowadays, students with disabilities are often **integrated (3)**, learning alongside their peers, while still feeling that they need to 'fit in' in a wider system that is designed for the majority of mainstream students.

As learning institutions become more **inclusive (4)**, more students begin to experience a sense of belonging.

To go even further, we can adopt the mindset of **Universal Design for Learning (5)** where *all* students, whether identified with an impairment or not, are considered different. With UDL, we accept, celebrate and mobilise students' variability.

## Principles of Universal Design for Learning

CAST (2018)

### 1.

Provide multiple means of **ENGAGEMENT**

Stimulate interest and motivation for learning by focusing on the **WHY** of learning which engages the affective network of the brain.

### 2.

Provide multiple means of **REPRESENTATION**

Present information and content in different ways to connect to the **WHAT** of learning which engages the recognition network of the brain.

### 3.

Provide multiple means of **ACTION & EXPRESSION**

Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know, understand and are able to do, by focusing on the **HOW** of learning, which engages the strategic network of the brain.

\*In this guide, we are using the terms 'functional impairment' and 'disability' interchangeably.



# WHY?

Education is largely based on the idea of designing instruction for the mythical 'average student'. Such a model reinforces power structures that favour dominant groups, therefore excluding historically marginalised groups - such as students with functional impairments. With UDL, we acknowledge that all students are **variable** and come with **intersecting identities** (including minority ones), we invite **diversity**, and we deliberately design instruction for **flexibility**, so that *all* students can access high-quality education and achieve their potential.

## Food for thought: What students and staff say

You can't just **assume** what people **can** or **cannot do**. Let's just **talk** about it.

My Autism is integral to **who I am** as a person.

People understand accessibility only when they have **experienced inaccessibility**. I would like people to understand that meeting **needs** for access isn't a **privilege**, it's a **right**.

Getting clear and sufficient information about a course, a lecture or an event **ahead of time** helps me prepare, adjust and succeed.

I feel **safe** on campus! The university has a lot of open spaces and is not too crowded.

We don't need teachers to be perfect or very knowledgeable about inclusion, we just need them to be **open** and **flexible**.

I am confronted with having to **ask, prove, convince, deal with paperwork...** All sorts of time-consuming bureaucracy & unpleasant conversations just to get my right to access fulfilled. It's really **exhausting** and **distressing**.

When I saw that there was a SMF\*\* Team at the university, I felt that there was a **net to catch me** if I fall.

**Communication** is so important. Experiences should be shared more often so everyone can feel **seen** and **heard**.

Awareness is a first step but we need **acceptance**.

We need to **connect** with one another at the **human level** through **dialogue**. That's where real **inclusion** lies.




# HOW?

With UDL, we can **lower or remove** barriers so that all students can access high-quality learning. There are different ways we can apply the UDL principles. For example, by adding close captions to videos as this does not only benefits students with a hearing impairment but also those with dyslexia, language learners, and anyone who likes to watch lectures in silence (e.g. in the train or in a shared room).

Let's take a look at 9 tips and their additional clickable resources, to implement UDL with our students right away!

## Multiple Ways of Engagement

Click here to watch the video



### Tip 1. Send a welcoming message

- Example of an invitational message to students [[Video](#)]

### Tip 2. Activate learning


- Thinking routines for active learning [[Website](#)]
- Menti, an interactive tool for digital active learning [[Website](#)]

### Tip 3. Listen with an open heart

- Form to ask students some questions before a course [[Form](#)]  
[\[Duplicate EUR Form\]](#)

## Multiple Ways of Representation

Click here to watch the video



### Tip 4. Consider accessibility

- Generate captions and a transcript for videos in Panopto [[Video](#)]
- Generate captions and transcript for videos on YouTube [[Video](#)]
- Captions with PowerPoint and in Teams [[Website](#)]

### Tip 5. Add modalities


- Alternatives for visual information [[Website](#)]
- Alternatives for auditory information [[Website](#)]

### Tip 6. Encourage collaboration

- Jigsaw strategy [[Video](#)]
- Team process tools [[Miro Board](#)]

## Multiple Ways of Action & Expression

Click here to watch the video



### Tip 7. Give choices

- GRASPS Assessment template [[Website](#)]

### Tip 8. Be flexible

- Feed-Back/Forward form for students [[Form](#)] [[Duplicate EUR Form](#)]
- Hybrid-Flexible Course Design [[Online Ebook](#)]

### Tip 9. Offer feedback

- Explore different types of rubrics [[Website](#)]
- Autonomy-Supportive Feedback strategies [[Presentation](#)]







# Find out more about the research behind UDL

**CAST (2018).** Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>.

**Coffman, S., & Draper, C. (2022).** Universal design for learning in higher education: A concept analysis. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 17 (1), 36–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2021.07.009>

**Cumming, T.M., & Rose, MC. (2021).** Exploring universal design for learning as an accessibility tool in higher education: a review of the current literature. *The Australian Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00471-7>

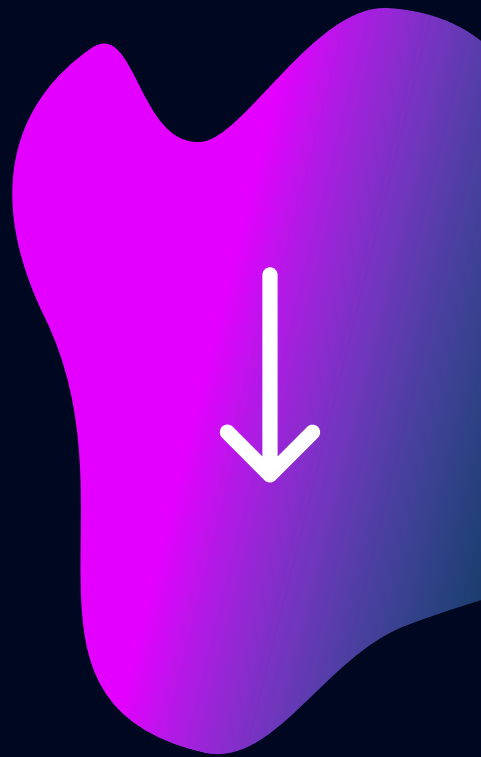
**Galkienė, A., & Monkevičienė, O. (2021).** *Improving Inclusive Education through Universal Design for Learning*. Springer Publishing.

**Griful-Freixenet, J., Struyven, K., Verstichele, M., & Andries, C. (2017).** Higher education students with disabilities speaking out: perceived barriers and opportunities of the Universal Design for Learning framework. *Disability & Society*, 32 (10), 1627–1649. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1365695>

**Meyer, A., Rose, DH, & Gordon, D. (2013).** *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice* (1st Edition). CAST Incorporated.

**Rose, T. (2016).** *The End of Average: How We Succeed in a World That Values Sameness*. (Illustrated ed.) HarperOne.

**Tobin, T.J., & Behling, K.T. (2018).** *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education (Teaching and Learning in Higher Education)* (1st ed.). West Virginia University Press.



## Authors

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