

How do you teach?

Check  each of the ways you create an accessible learning environment.

If you answer **YES** to most of the following questions, you are reaching more students through the principles of *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*.

1. Ideas and information are represented in multiple ways:

Syllabusⁱ

- Your course syllabus clearly describes your expectations of students.
- You inform ALL students, including those with disabilities, that they are welcome to meet with you if they need special considerations or accommodations.
- You identify essential course content.
- You include contact information for the UNBF Accessibility Centre.

Instructional Methods

- You present information in a variety of formats (e.g., lecture, text, graphics, audio, video, hands-on exercises, role playing, problem solving activities, guest speakers, field trips, discussions).
- You help students recall prior knowledge.ⁱⁱ
- You begin each lecture with an outline of what will be covered.
- You summarize key points throughout the lecture, and tie these points to the larger course outcomes or objectives.
- You use technologies (e.g., clickers, Desire2Learn) that enhance learning.
- You post electronic equivalents of paper handouts and required reading assignments in alternative formats such as audio and video.
- You post audio/video recordings of your lectures and make them available to all students in your class.ⁱⁱⁱ
- You create a reliable method for sharing student notes of your lectures that also benefits those who need a personal note taker.
- You ensure that course textbooks are available in e-text format **and** print format and are available in advance of the course start date.^{iv}

Rationale:

Many students with learning disabilities have difficulty interpreting information and therefore require explicit, direct instructions.

Students with disabilities sometimes feel stigmatized. An invitation to discuss their needs helps the student feel welcome and supported.

Rationale:

- Providing lectures in various media forms allows students to process new information using their learning strengths.
- Helping students recall prior knowledge, using outlines and summaries are proven ways to enhance student learning.
- E-texts or PDFs are essential for students who use text reading software in order to read and understand written material.

Rationale:

Just as students may process information differently than through the traditional, talk, read, and write methods, some students are better able to represent their knowledge using non-traditional formats.

2. Students can express their comprehension in multiple ways:

- You encourage students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in ways other than traditional tests and exams (e.g., projects, portfolios, journals, audio and video clips).

- You permit students to express their knowledge and skills in ways they propose without compromising academic standards or required outcomes.
- Your assessments measure students' achievement of the learning outcomes or objectives, as they are stated in the syllabus.
- You use technologies that facilitate class communication and participation.
- You allow assignments to be submitted electronically.

3. Students have multiple opportunities for engagement:

- You express enthusiasm for each topic you teach, and explain its real-world significance.
- You challenge students with meaningful assignments.
- You create a class climate in which student diversity is respected.
- You give prompt and instructive feedback on assignments.
- You supplement lecture and reading assignments with visual aids (e.g., photographs, videos, diagrams, interactive simulations).
- You make yourself available to students during office hours in flexible formats (e.g., face-to-face, email, online chat, telephone).

Rationale:

Students with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder often have difficulty initiating and maintaining their attention, interest, and motivation. Presenting information in a variety of ways, injecting novelty and showing enthusiasm and passion for your subject area are proven ways of engaging students in the learning process.

Next Steps—Congratulations! If you answered yes to some or most, you are reaching students through principles of UDL.

Now, identify practices from the list you are willing to try. <http://tinyurl.com/ALCresources>

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What support and/or training do you require, if any, to be able to use the practices in your teaching? Contact CETL (453-4744 or cetl@unb.ca) or the UNBF Student Accessibility Centre (453-3515 or unbds@unb.ca) for assistance.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ⁱ Jane Drover. Learning Disabilities, ADHD & Universal Design for Learning Presentation, November 22, 2012.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.