



## Universal Instructional Design in the Classroom

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Humber College is increasing accessibility for students with disabilities. One important approach that will be increasing in our day-to-day lives as we work with students with disabilities is Universal Instructional Design (UID).

### Universal Instructional Design

UID is 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. UID promotes the application of flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

### Universal Instructional Design in the Classroom

UID in the classroom involves considering the potential needs of all learners when designing and delivering course instruction to ensure a high degree of accessibility to subject matter and instruction. In the classroom, UID incorporates instructional materials and activities that make learning goals achievable by individuals with a wide range of learning styles and/or needs. People attend to, organize, engage with and remember information differently. Some people process what they see while other people take notes to help them understand information.

Incorporating UID in the classroom creates the conditions for students with a range of abilities to access and understand course content, facilitating a greater number of student successes. The use of UID helps to make instruction and teaching accessible because it incorporates into the design and delivery of a course a deliberate and preemptive response to the changing and varying learning needs of all students.

- Example: Chris is a student in Computer Animation who has vision loss. In April, she approaches the professors who will be teaching her courses in the upcoming Fall semester. Chris requests the titles of the textbooks she will need for her courses so that Disability Services can arrange to get them in Braille.

What can Chris's professors do to help ensure that Chris is able to access the information required for her courses in a timely manner?

- ✓ A first step would be to ask Chris how they could accommodate her disability in the classroom; she probably has many good suggestions for them based on her experience.
- ✓ A second step would be for instructors to select course textbooks as early as possible. Some accommodation requests can take time, for example the Braille transcription process can take up to four months. By selecting course textbooks early, instructors can effectively manage a delay.
- ✓ It is also valuable when instructors consider course outlines in advance and choose supplementary readings early. By incorporating UID into course preparation, Chris's professors consider the potential needs of learners when designing and delivering instruction as well as identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers. (see below for suggestions about how to apply UID in the classroom)

## **Applying Principles of Universal Instructional Design in the Classroom**

### **Delivery Methods:**

Many instructors are already utilizing a range of methods to facilitate the learning styles of all students in the classroom. Some examples of different instructional methods include: lecture, discussion, hands-on activities, projects, cases and internet-based interaction.

### **Learning Materials:**

Ensure that all course materials can be made available in a range or accessible formats, for example in large print or an electronic document. Provide students with an outline in advance of each class session to give students plenty of time to prepare accordingly for the content that will be covered.

### **Demonstration of Knowledge:**

Provide students frequent and flexible opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in ways other than written tests and papers. Consider using group work, demonstrations, presentations and portfolios to evaluate a student's understanding.

### **Physical Effort and Access:**

Ensure that all course related activities minimize the need for extensive physical effort and accommodate the physical skills of all students. Reduce the need for unnecessary physical travel by making materials and examinations accessible and available to be submitted electronically.

**Source:** This information in this document was developed by Human Rights and Diversity with information from "[Accessible Customer Service: Online Training Text Version](#)" Laurentian University and "[Universal Instructional Design](#)" Queen's University.