Blended and Online Workshop Series:
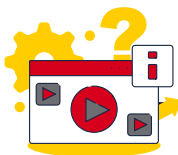
UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING FOR
BLENDED AND ONLINE LEARNING

RESOURCE SHEET

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Introduction / Context

Universal Design for Learning is a framework that guides the design of courses and learning environments to appeal to the largest number of learners. It emphasizes flexibility in how instructional material is presented, how students demonstrate their knowledge and skills, and in how they are engaged in learning. This resource can be used to demonstrate how the three principles of universal design for learning: engagement (opportunities for student involvement in their learning); representation (the ways in which learners' access and interact with course information); and action and expression (how students demonstrate their learning in various forms) can be applied to blended and online learning environments.

ENGAGEMENT
Opportunities for student involvement in their learning

Build in opportunities for learners to provide their input on how tasks are designed	• Create space (survey/poll) for periodic informal feedback during synchronous and asynchronous learning • Let students decide whether certain tasks (ex. group discussions) will occur online and offline
Integrate learners' experiences, identities, backgrounds, and cultures.	• In example scenarios or problems, use a variety of names, settings, or cultural references. • Design assignments or activities in a variety of social, professional or cultural contexts.
Include activities that ask learners to engage with the real world.	• Ask students to identify the potential real-world audiences or applications they see in their work.
Divide long-term course or assignment goals into smaller short-term objectives.	• Ask students to create a manageable timeline for their projects.
Provide opportunities for frequent and timely feedback.	• Give feedback using rubrics (to expedite grading and clearly indicate student's progress • Pair students to provide formative peer feedback based on a rubric or task guidelines

REFERENCES

Takacs, S., Zhang, J. & Lee, H. (2020). Universal Design for Learning: Strategies for Blended and Online Learning. Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation. Justice Institute of British Columbia. https://ctli.jibc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Universal-Design-for-Learning_Strategies-for-Blended-and-Online-Learning.pdf

https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/universal-design-learning-higher-education

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REPRESENTATION

Ways in which learners access and engage with course information

Support learners in accessing and using multiple forms of the same information.	• Link to online resources where students can find definitions of key terms.
Provide learners with videos or animations with control in sound and speed.	• Record welcome videos and live lectures for students to access. • Ask students to find and share helpful resources on D2L.
Map the relationship between important components or ideas.	• Ask students to create concept maps to highlight relationships. • Provide short videos that emphasize relationships between course concepts.
Chunk information into smaller pieces.	• Release course modules adaptively to prevent information overload.
Provide a high-level checklist for content, activities, and assignments.	• Design a checklist so students can easily map the course structure for the day of the week. • Assign a group each week to create a checklist for the class.

ACTION & EXPRESSION

Ways in which learners access and engage with course information

Build opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge in different formats.	• Create tasks that can be done entirely or partly in writing or through presentation (online or video).
Give feedback in different formats.	• Record audio feedback, post video feedback and offer synchronous sessions (when possible through office hours).
Provide samples that learners can refer to for content organization and assignment.	• Design templates for content organization and assignment. • Share student work samples (with permission) to illustrate course outcomes.
Pose questions for learners to reflect and self-monitor progress.	• Ask students to reflect on their learning at the end of class. • At key points, prompt students to consider how they have met course outcomes.
End course with activities or interactive assessments.	• Have students summarize key take-aways and share with each other. • Create low-stake short quizzes as a way to summarize key concepts and assess learnings.