

# Universal Design for Learning Implementation

Universal design for learning (UDL) is meant to be a proactive approach to common and systemic learning barriers. UDL implementation makes learning more accessible, inclusive and tractable for all students, while supporting faculty to save time and effort when teaching.

The sections below outline UDL implementation ideas and ready-to-use UDL initiatives that are designed with three elements in mind:

- Based on universal design for learning guidelines.
- Reduction of individual accommodation needs.
- Benefits for students and faculty.

In the tabs to the left will find a number of current universal design for learning implementation ideas and initiatives. These UDL ideas provide a proactive approach to common accommodation requests, and can be implemented quickly and easily.

More implementation ideas and initiatives will be added to this section as they are developed.

## UDL Course Statement

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If you have included accessible and inclusive UDL elements have been included in a course, be explicit and let students know by including a UDL statement on the eLearn course site and/or course learning plan.

Below is a sample of a UDL statement that can be copied, pasted and modified for the course(s), based on the UDL features that have been included.

### Universal Design for Learning

This course has been designed using Universal Design for Learning guidelines. The following elements have been incorporated into the course to support accessibility and promote inclusion:

- 100% additional time has been added to eLearn quizzes.
- Varied assessment methods within the course.
- Course content has been written in HTML so the text can be read using the "Listen" button at the top of each page.
- Course materials provided in multiple formats (PowerPoint and PDF).
- Closed captioning or a transcript provided for videos.

- Access to a text-to-speech tool to support listening to course content that is outside of eLearn.

## Online Course Layout

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An explicit and well organized course layout allows learners to access course content quickly and easily, with less confusion and frustration. While there is not one ideal course layout that is perfect for every course or everyone, there are some general UDL considerations to apply to courses to make it easier for learners to access the online learning environment.

### Implementation

When designing the functionality and organization of your online course environment, consider:

- Providing navigation instructions.
  - Letting students know how to access course content, what is important and when it is most relevant makes learners able to access content more effectively. For more information, see the “Course Navigation Instructions” content on this page.
- Providing multiple ways for learners to access key information.
  - Including key information such as assignment due dates, contact information, placement materials, etc. in a few different locations will support students finding the content easily and referring to it often. For example, assignment outlines and rubrics can be posted in the week in which they are issued and/or due, as well as in a separate content folder.
- Matching the learning plan to the eLearn content headings and grade book.
  - Having the learning plan match the content section in eLearn, as well as the grade book, allows learners to more easily and quickly reference course materials and assessment information. For example, if the learning plan is divided by week and/or date, the content headings in eLearn should also be divided by week and/or date. If the learning plan is divided by module, the online content should match. In addition, ensure the assessment titles are the same on the learning plan, gradebook and assignment outlines.
- Reflecting on past deliveries of the course, or past course layouts.
  - Often courses go through revisions as sections are taught. Reflecting on deliveries through a UDL lens can lead to improvements in course layout. For example, if students had difficulty finding specific content, this would be good information to duplicate elsewhere in the course. Or, if learners

missed a particular assessment, organizing the layout to draw more attention to assessment information would be beneficial.

In addition, while there is not a single course content layout that is ideal, the following format is one that a number of faculty have found beneficial (subheadings are identified in bold text):

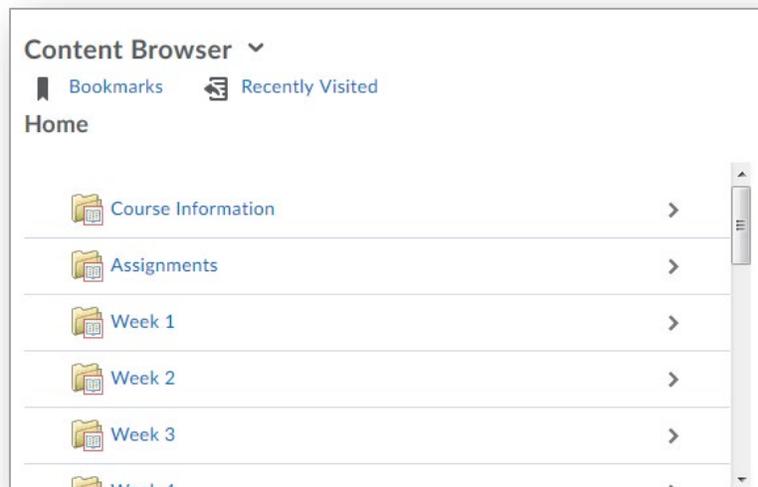
### Course Information

This folder may contain:

- **Getting Started** which can include your course navigation instructions
- **Course Requirements**
- **Instructor Information**
- **Course Outline**
- **Learning Plan**
- **Universal Design for Learning Elements**
  - See the bottom of this webpage for more information regarding a UDL statement for courses.

### Course Content

Ideally, the folders in course content will be identified as they are on the learning plan. For example by week:



Subheadings in course content may include:

- **Read**
  - **Required**
    - Include required readings for the week and/or lecture notes.
  - **Recommended** or **Supplemental** (if any)

- Include the additional readings that offer an alternate way of understanding key concepts, or readings that support deepening knowledge.
- **Watch**
  - **Required**
    - Include required videos for the week and/or lecture presentations.
  - **Recommended or Supplemental** (if any)
    - Include the additional videos that offer an alternate way of understanding key concepts, or videos that support deepening knowledge.
- **Complete**
  - Include any course activities or lab work that needs to be completed for the week.
  - Include assignment and quiz information in this section.

The above format can be modified to meet the needs of individual courses. Some courses include a separate folder for assignments, readings and placement information to support easier access to these resources. Others include subheadings in the Content section for labs and placement materials.

Additional folders could include:

#### Assignments

All assignment information and grading rubrics can be included in one folder to provide students an alternate way to access this key information.

#### Readings/Videos/Lectures

All readings, videos or lectures, identified as they are in the content section and learning plan, are included in one folder to give additional access to this content.

#### Recommended Tutorials

Additional course specific tutorials, or more general options such as those for plagiarism or eLearn, can be included in this section to provide students with additional resources to be successful in their studies.

## Course Navigation Instructions

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Providing learners with explicit information at the start of a course is an ideal way to set course expectations, help students quickly find key information and offer directions regarding how to proceed through the course.

## Implementation

The following template suggests headings and content that may guide the development of course navigation instructions:

### Course Introduction

This section may include:

- An overview of the course and assessment methods
- Course expectations
- A link to the course outline
- A link to the learning plan
- A UDL statement that includes all of the UDL elements used in the course (for a sample UDL statement, please reference the bottom on this webpage)
- Any information regarding Accessible Learning Services and obtaining disability-related accommodations in the course

### Faculty Introduction

This section may include:

- A welcome message, which may be accompanied with a faculty photo or delivered via video
- Faculty contact information and office hours

### Accessing Content

This section may include explanations of:

- How the course is laid out (for example by week, by module, or by topic)
- Other sections included (for example Assessments, Additional Resources, etc.)
- What content should be accessed first, second, third, etc.

The information above is meant to provide options to develop course navigation instructions and can be altered to meet the specific needs of a course.

## Content Options

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UDL works to provide students with options to obtain course content in the way that is most beneficial to their learning. Additionally, students with disabilities often require course materials in alternate format, which can create a time consuming barrier for students, as well as faculty. From a UDL perspective, providing course content in two formats initially, is supportive of all learners and can save faculty time during the semester.

## Implementation

Ideally, all course content would be provided in at least two formats. Options for providing multiple formats may include:

- Content in the HTML editor and a link to Word versions.
- PowerPoint presentations with PDF versions also available.
- Captioned videos posted with a transcript.

If you have any questions regarding how to include links to additional formats, contact your [Educational Technology Specialist](#) in the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

It is important that content also meet accessibility guidelines. To learn more about how to make documents and presentations accessible, check out the [Tools and Resources section of the Accessibility website](#).

## Note Taking Support

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Clear and concise lecture notes support learners to prepare for lectures, study more efficiently and complete assessment more effectively. However, many students struggle with effective note taking and do not end up with the course content that will serve them best. In addition, note taking accommodations are among of the most common for students with disabilities, and can be challenging to implement for both learners and faculty.

There are a number of ways faculty can proactively support all students to have complete and comprehensive course notes, including:

- Posting lecture notes in advance of class.
- Posting lecture presentations in advance of class.
- Crowdsourcing lecture notes.

### Posting Lecture Notes

By posting lecture notes to eLearn in advance of class, learners can proactively review lecture content and prepare for class. Providing lecture notes in advance also removes the individualized accommodation barriers for students with disabilities, as well as faculty.

Lecture notes can include:

- Complete faculty notes.
- Notes that include blank spaces where students can complete as it is discussed in lecture.
- A series of questions about the lecture that learners can answer in the lecture and/or weekly resources/readings.
- A detailed outline of the lecture.

To support the greatest accessibility it is ideal to post the notes in two formats, such as copying and pasting the notes into the HTML editor and providing a link to a Word document. If faculty require support is required to include links to downloadable Word documents, connect with the designated [Educational Technology Specialist](#).

### Implementation

1. Post lecture notes, in advance, to the eLearn course webpage.
  - The posted notes can be organized however the content is organized, for example by week or module.
2. Advise students that lecture notes have been posted and provide them with explicit instructions on how to use the notes effectively.
  - The instructions could include reviewing the notes prior to class, printing or downloading the notes to complete them in class, using the notes effectively to study, etc.

### Posting Lecture Presentations

Similar to posting lecture notes, lecture presentations can to support students with note taking and class preparedness.

### Implementation

1. Post the lecture presentations, in advance, to the eLearn course webpage.
  - The presentations can be organized however the content is organized, for example by week or module.
2. Advise students that lecture presentations have been posted and provide them with explicit instructions on how to use the presentations effectively.
  - This could include reviewing the presentations prior to class, printing or downloading the presentations to write additional notes from lecture directly on the slides, etc.

To support the accessibility needs of all learners posting the lecture notes in two formats is ideal. This could include the PowerPoint presentation and a link to a PDF version or creating the presentation as a video and providing the original presentation as well.

### Crowdsourcing Lecture Notes

Crowdsourcing of lecture notes was an idea originally developed by Dr. David Rose from Harvard. It was designed within the framework of UDL to support students and faculty.

Crowdsourcing lecture notes has the capacity to:

- Support all students to double check content and improve their notes and note taking skills.
- Allow faculty to see what students are taking away from lectures.

- Reduce the need for peer note taking for students with disabilities.

Resources have been developed to support the implementation of the crowdsourcing lecture notes initiative.

For faculty:

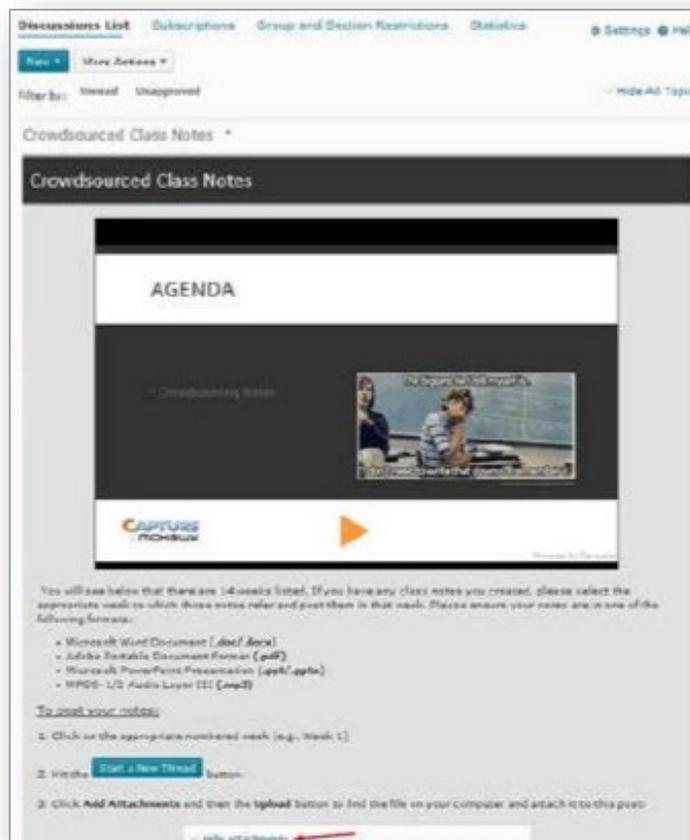
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning has created a discussion forum that can be imported into a course discussion area.

For students:

- The discussion forum has a video for students to learn about crowdsourcing and note taking, instructions for posting notes and a designated note area for each week of the course.
- A co-curricular record credit, which allows students to gain recognition for their crowdsourcing of lecture notes.

### Implementation

To implement, the Crowdsourcing Lecture Notes initiative in your course(s), connect with Jeff Rankine at [jeffrey.rankine@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:jeffrey.rankine@mohawkcollege.ca) or extension 4031. He will be able to include the crowdsourcing discussion forum within your course.



Then, advise students that crowdsourcing lecture notes is an option in the course(s) and encourage them to post their notes.

## Interim Due Dates

Executive functioning skills, including time management and organization, can impact students' ability to plan assignments and complete large assignments. Learners in the first or second semester of their program can often benefit from support to plan their time and organize their assignments. In addition, providing executive functioning support can reduce the issues raised from late assignments that can have a significant impact on both students and faculty.

To assist learners to produce the clearest reflection of their knowledge and to ensure faculty can accurately assess the learning outcome, consider providing interim due dates on assignment outlines and/or course learning plan. For example if an assignment has three weeks to be completed, faculty can outline what elements should be completed in week one, what should be completed in week two and what needs to be done to finish the assignment and submit it in week three.

If faculty are able, ungraded feedback can be given for each identified date. Additionally, resources and supports can be offered for each portion of the assignment, such as a link to the [Library](#) for research support in the first week or the [Writing Centre](#) for editing help in the last week.

### Implementation

1. Identify which assessments would benefit from interim due dates.
2. Determine steps and resources required to complete the assignment and determine a timeline.
3. Provide the timeline/interim due dates on the assignment outline, the course learning plan and/or wherever assignment information is posted.

## Additional Time for eLearn Quizzes

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Additional time for testing is one of the widest used disability-related accommodations at Mohawk College, as it supports a wide-range of disability types and needs. Faculty can provide additional time, for individual students and quizzes, through eLearn. While using eLearn for quizzes, adding the additional time when required, often eliminating the need for students with disabilities to arrange testing accommodations for quizzes. However, adding time individually does take additional time and effort for both faculty and students.

Applying UDL guidelines to eLearn quizzes can provide a supportive evaluation environment for all students, as well as save time and effort for faculty and students. Instead of individually adding time to each quiz, faculty can add additional time to all eLearn quizzes for all learners in a course and provide a statement to indicate that this has been done.

The most common additional time accommodation is typically 50% to 100%. To ensure as many students are supported as possible, and to limit additional effort, the recommendation would be to add 100% additional time to all eLearn quizzes. Ideally, when suitable, unlimited time can be offered.

### Implementation

To implement:

1. Determine the appropriate length of time for the quiz.
2. Add 100% additional time, or unlimited time, to each quiz in eLearn.
3. Provide the following statement anywhere quiz information has been provided (for example, on the course learning plan, eLearn course overview page, etc.).

### Additional Time for eLearn Quizzes

The quizzes in this course have been designed using universal design for learning guidelines and (give the percentage) additional time has already been added to each quiz in support of all students.

Please note, the statement above can be modified if unlimited time is offered.

## Additional Text-to-Speech Tool

ReadSpeaker provides the "Listen" function for the HTML content in eLearn, while Doc Reader gives learners the option to listen to external course content such as PDFs and Word documents. However, courses may have resources that are not accessible through these software tools, or faculty may wish to provide an additional way to access course content. It is important to note that OntarioLearn does not have ReadSpeaker, and the addition of a text-to-speech tool provides a much needed accessibility resource for these students.

### Implementation

Copy and paste the statement and link below to provide access to a free, external text-to-speech tool:

#### Listening to Course Content

Interested in being able to listen to course content outside of eLearn?

Download a free text-to-speech tool at

<http://www.naturalreaders.com/index.html>.

For OntarioLearn courses, there is a link to an external text-to-speech tool that students can download for free, on the OntarioLearn course master.



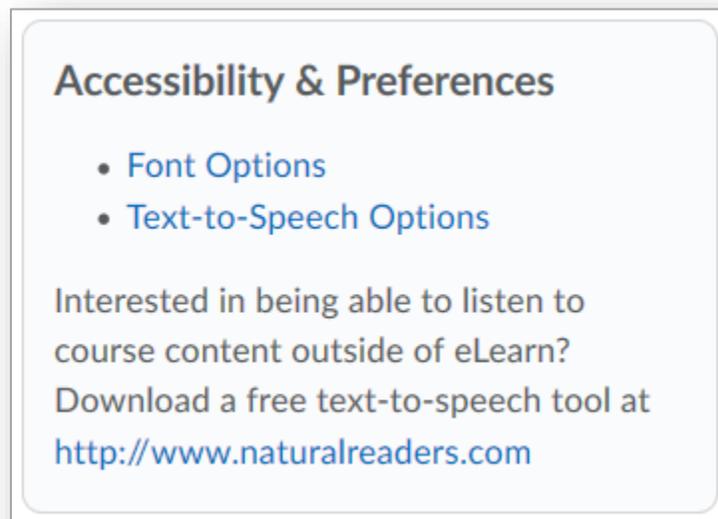
## eLearn Accessibility and Preference Widget

Students benefit from options that allow them to change their online learning environment to meet their individual learning needs and/or preferences. The eLearn

Accessibility and Preference Widget includes captioned videos that provide students instructions to:

- Change the default font type and size in eLearn
- Use ReadSpeaker for HTML content in eLearn
- Use DocReader in eLearn
- Learn about additional accessibility tools within eLearn.

The widget also includes a link to a free, external text-to-speech tool to provide an additional option to learners who prefer to listen to external course content.



## Implementation

The Accessibility and Preference widget has already been included on the eLearn My Home page, the default Course Home page and the Student Support page of the Mohawk College website.

If you are using a customized Course Home page and want to add this widget, please follow these steps:

1. Access the course you wish to add the widget to
2. Click Edit on the course Navigation Bar
3. Select Homepages
4. Click the name of your custom Course Home page (name should be in blue and demarcated as Active on the right hand side of the screen)
5. Under Widgets select the area in which you wish to add this widget and then click that area's corresponding Add Widgets button
6. In the list of widgets check the box beside eLearn Accessibility/Preference Features for Students and hit the Add button
7. Hit the Save and Close button

The Accessibility and Preference widget will now appear on the custom Course Home page.

## Additional Information

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If you are interested in implementing UDL or any of these initiatives, need support to customize UDL for your course(s) or have implementation ideas, please connect with Darla Benton Kearney, Universal Design for Learning Curriculum Consultant, in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, at [darla.benton@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:darla.benton@mohawkcollege.ca) or extension 3688.

Take the [UDL Course Assessment](#) to determine the UDL elements currently in your course(s) and gain additional resources to support further UDL implementation.