Universal Design for Learning
Information for Faculty

Universal design for learning is a curriculum design, development and delivery framework used to create accessible and inclusive learning environments. The three central principles of universal design for learning are:

- **Provide multiple means of engagement** – Develop learning options to produce and sustain interest.
- **Provide multiple means of representation** – Provide content in multiple ways.
- **Provide multiple means of action and expression** – Offer options that allow students to fully demonstrate knowledge.

Research identifies universal design for learning as a “best practice” approach to curriculum design, development and delivery in all educational settings, including face-to-face, blended and online learning.

You may have heard of alternate educational universal design frameworks, such as universal instructional design, universal design for instruction, as well as universal design for learning. These terms are often used interchangeably. While there are differences, all of these universal design frameworks focus on creating accessible learning environments.

**Benefits of Universal Design for Learning**

Universal design for learning has benefits for both learners and faculty. While the greatest benefits of universal design implementation are often felt by students with disabilities, there are numerous reasons to implement universal design for learning principles in a college environment.

Universal design can:

- Limit, or proactively remove, learning barriers to improve learning for all students.
- Reduce the need, and time required, to arrange individual accommodations.
- Offer students an opportunity to more fully demonstrate their knowledge.
- Help Mohawk College meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
Universal Design for Learning and You

Implementing universal design for learning can be quick and easy. Many faculty at Mohawk College have already added universal design elements to their courses. If you are not doing these already, consider the following:

1. Provide multiple means of engagement
   - Give choice and promote autonomy.
   - Ensure that learning is relevant and contextualized.
   - Support communication and collaboration.
   - Encourage self-reliance, reflection and personal assessment.

2. Provide multiple means of representation
   - Use a variety of media to deliver content.
   - Offer options to change how content is displayed.
   - Be explicit with instructions and offer clarification.
   - Provide context to support new concepts.

3. Provide multiple means of action and expression
   - Employ multiple tools and media for communication.
   - Facilitate planning and goal setting for learning opportunities.
   - Organize course content and workload.

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

Universal Design for Learning and Us

If you are interested in learning more about UDL, or would like support for your implementation you can:

- Access the Universal Design for Learning webpages.
- Review Mohawk College’s UDL Standard.
- Use the UDL Course Assessment.
- Attend UDL and/or curriculum design workshops through the Centre for Teaching & Learning.
- Connect with Darla Benton Kearney, UDL Curriculum Consultant, at darla.benton@mohawkcollege.ca or 905-575-1212 extension 3688.
Contact Information

Darla Benton Kearney is the Universal Design for Learning Curriculum Consultant in the Center for Teaching & Learning. Please feel free to connect with her at darla.benton@mohawkcollege.ca or extension 3688.