



**“Digital training for NGO's youth workers to become disability support moderators for youth with disabilities”**

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**WP 2 Project deliverables**  
**Result 2(R2):**  
**Training handbook on inclusive**  
**education adjustments including**  
**guidelines and tips**

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## Introduction



The goal of inclusive education is to transfer the message that “every learner matters and matters equally”. Unfortunately, not all professionals share the same value, as they continue to marginalize certain students who encounter a disability from entering mainstream Higher education.

According to [Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#):

1. Countries recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, countries shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

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- a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
- b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realizing this right, countries shall ensure that:

- a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system based on disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education;
- b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
- c) Necessary adaptations are made according to the concrete needs;
- d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
- e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

3. Countries shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, Governments shall take appropriate measures, including:

- a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
- b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deaf blind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, countries shall take appropriate measures to employ teaching and supporting teaching staff, which should be qualified in sign language, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities. All these recommendations are taking into account in the recent training of Disability support moderators by the DISMODE project consortium.

5. Countries shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, countries shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

By signing the [Erasmus Charter for Higher Education \(ECHE\)](#), over 5000 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have committed to respect in full the principles of non-discrimination set out in the Erasmus+ programme and ensure equal access and opportunities to include and mobile participants from all backgrounds. Each higher education institution (HEI), by signing this Charter commits to ensuring equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds. Therefore, students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions can benefit from the support services that the receiving institution offers to its local students and staff.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide additional knowledge to the candidates to become Disability support moderators with relevant methods, strategies, tips and

practices, which can ensure the proper execution of their work. They are based on the [Universal design for learning guidelines](#).

The aim of our consortium is that HEI with whom the partners are working or representing (in the case of IPB) to ensure maximum access for all persons wishing to receive higher education or to participate in lifelong learning forms to appropriate forms of education in order to develop their full potential, their talent and creative potential by creating an accessible environment for quality education and their successful integration into the natural social environment in order to achieve personal prosperity and quality of life, guaranteeing their independence and autonomy.

The handbook can be useful also for academic staff, including curriculum and course developers, who are eager to create and implement an inclusive learning environment.

The success of creating inclusive education as a key to establishing inclusive societies depends on the agreement among all relevant partners on a common vision supported by a number of specific steps to be taken to put this vision into practice.

Many factors can help in facilitating inclusion and equity in education, some of them being the pedagogical staff skills and attitudes beginning with the leaders of the educational institutions themselves (one of the main), the pedagogical strategies, access to the curriculum, the infrastructure, the funding for resources, the professional development, etc.

The lecturers have a very important and challenging role to play, as they need to find and apply methods to enhance equal opportunities and quality education to all learners by promoting the interaction and participation, so all learners can enjoy a meaningful learning experience and engagement in other activities. Lecturers need to collaborate with other professionals such as the Disability support moderators for a more holistic support.

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The move towards inclusion is a gradual one that should be based on clearly articulated principles that address system-wide development and multi-educational sectoral approaches involving all levels of the society.

The **Disability support moderators of youth with disabilities** are expected to implement several duties and tasks (*see Result 1 New functional profile of Disability support moderators of youth with disabilities for further information*) clearly related to inclusive education:

- systematically find out the youth with disability individual development, learning, personality, and social growth needs, language and civic competence for the planning and implementation of a student-centred learning process;
- in cooperation with other professionals in the educational institution to plan a coordinated learning process with the aim to include all learners and promote their growth;
- to plan an inclusive learning process and environment, setting specific results to be achieved for each learner and choosing appropriate methods, techniques, tools and resources;
- to create an inclusive, intellectually stimulating, emotionally and physically safe learning environment by supporting the learner's dignified, responsible and safe behaviour, implementing the appropriate development needs of each learner approach;
- to cooperate with parents with regards to the learner identifying individual learning needs, planning and implementing solutions;
- to ensure the implementation of a learning process that meets the needs of the learner's individual development and is close to life situations;
- to be able to advise on the application of various teaching methods, techniques and teaching aids in accordance with the needs of the learner's individual development and the learning outcomes to be achieved;



- in cooperation with lecturers, pedagogical support staff, the management of the educational institution, the learners and the learners' parents, to communicate information regarding the learner's growth, performance and the necessary support for the improvement of learning”.

## 1. Equity and implementation of inclusive education in Europe



Education was recognized as a human right in the UN “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” article 26 in 1948. In 1960, the UNESCO “Convention against Discrimination” declared that discrimination in education is a violation of rights enunciated in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. In article 1, discrimination was explained as any “distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education”. Although the disability was not included in the “Convention against Discrimination” as a characteristic that would lead to any form of discrimination, in the following years disability was internationally recognised as a possible reason for discrimination in education, it stated that the right to education for all students.

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Primarily, inclusive education for a person with disabilities is a guaranteed right by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights<sup>1</sup>. Besides, the UN adopted The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)<sup>2</sup> and its optional protocol on December 13, 2006<sup>3</sup>. This convention contains fundamental human rights and personal freedom. This Convention emphasized the right to inclusive education with a General Comment (No. 4) in 2016. It stresses that the recognition of inclusion as the key to achieving the right to education has strengthened over the past 30 years. The Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities also enshrined the first legally binding instrument to contain a reference to the concept of quality inclusive education. Sustainable Development Goal 4 to affirm the value of inclusive, quality, and equitable education. Inclusive education is central to achieving high-quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities, and the development of inclusive, peaceful, and fair societies.

Above mentioned CRPD Article 24 indicates that:

1. State parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. To realize this right without discrimination and based on equal opportunity, State parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:
  - 1.1. the full development of human potential and a sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and human diversity;

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

<sup>3</sup>United Nations. (2006). *Optional protocol to the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/optional-protocol-to-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

- 1.2. the development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents, and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- 1.3. enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
2. In realizing this right, State parties shall ensure that:
  - 2.1. persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system based on disability, and that student with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or secondary education, on the basis of disability;
  - 2.2. persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
  - 2.3. reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
  - 2.4. persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
  - 2.5. effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
3. State parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end,  
State parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
  - 3.1. facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - 3.2. facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
  - 3.3. ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular student, who are blind, deaf or deaf and blind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and

modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. To help ensure the realization of this right, State parties shall take appropriate measures to employ lecturers, including lecturers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques, and materials to support persons with disabilities.

5. State parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities can access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education, and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, State parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided for persons with disabilities.

Article 24 mainly constructs the basic levels of the inclusive education and guides member states and other institutions accordingly. The inclusive education and the equity in education has been an important agenda in the worldwide international documents for a while, yet the advocacy for inclusive education continues to grow. In the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the plan of “action for people, planet and prosperity” comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) is the educational: to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

In other words, equity means ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities. In education, education equity means that everyone has access to the same qualitative educational opportunities. As education is considered to be the means of transforming the lives of student, of enabling upward socioeconomic mobility and the key to escaping poverty, it is important to ensure the access to education and university enrolment for all students. Educational equity should be provided by enhancing

education systems, education programmes and classes by taking into account the wide diversity of student's characteristics and needs, and by providing education for all.

We may conclude that the education for all is the foundation of inclusive education. The 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement<sup>4</sup> recognized the importance to work towards “universities for all” - institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs. As it was stated in Salamanca Statement “Education for All effectively means FOR ALL, particularly, those who are most vulnerable and most in need”<sup>5</sup>. It was a new direction for inclusive education, by ensuring that student with special needs have an equal right to education to learn in regular universities together with their siblings.

The success of creating inclusive education as the key to establishing inclusive societies depends on the agreement among all relevant partners on a common vision supported by a number of specific steps to be taken to put this vision into practice. The move towards inclusion is a gradual one that should be based on clearly articulated principles that address system-wide development and multi-educational sectorial approaches involving all levels of the society. The barriers to inclusion can be reduced through active collaboration between policymakers, educational staff and other stakeholders, including the active involvement of members of the local community, such as political and religious leaders, local education officials and the media.

European Union and its institutions encourage an inclusive environment especially in the European education system. In the first step, all European legislation systems progress in harmony with the UN regulations. All EU members accepted UN CRPD protocols for the implementation of their education system. The European Convention

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. UNESCO.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. UNESCO. Page 4.

of Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>6</sup> in article 14 states that “the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms outlined in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or another status”. According to Treaty on the

Functioning of the European Union<sup>7</sup>, “In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation”(art. 10).

In addition to these, the European Commission underlines through the European Pillar of Social Rights (2017)<sup>8</sup> that “Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training, and lifelong learning to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market”. Moreover, both the European Commission and the European Council are collaboratively working on the implementation of education and training strategies (ET 2020)<sup>9</sup> to reach inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences as priority areas for European cooperation in the field of education and training.

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<sup>6</sup> Coucil of Europe. (2010). The European convention of human rights.  
[https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention\\_eng.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>European Union. (2012). Consolidated version of the treaty on the functioning of the European Union.  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>

<sup>8</sup>European Commission. (2017). *The European pillar of social rights in 20 principles*.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>9</sup>*The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) is a forum which allows Member States to exchange best practices and to learn from each other.*  
[https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework_en)

Besides, the European Accessibility Act<sup>10</sup> aims to encourage and improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in the Member States. The Act promises benefits for businesses, people with disabilities, and elderly people.

The Council of Europe<sup>11</sup> promotes the rights and full participation of the person with disability in society and specifically in education. Since 2009 several recommendations on ensuring full inclusion of student and young persons with disabilities have been developed (2009, 2010, and 2013).

The 2020 “Fundamental rights report”<sup>12</sup> provided a description concerning the EU progress towards fundamental rights issues on the EU level. One part of the report is devoted to student’s rights. Although it reports slight improvement, the student’s rights issue remains as important as before, as one in four students are under the risk of poverty and social exclusion, and the most vulnerable are those with migrant background. There are several groups that are experiencing discrimination in the society and education – students with disabilities, students with learning difficulties, Roma students, student with different national and religious background, migrants, LGBTIQ+. Although there are many plans for promoting inclusive education, only limited progress on inclusive education for student with disabilities is reported.

The major problems are connected with:

- Separated education systems for student with and without disabilities;

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<sup>10</sup> European accessibility act.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1202#:~:text=The%20European%20accessibility%20act%20is,EU%20leading%20to%20costs%20reduction>

<sup>11</sup>Council of Europe (n.d.). *Students with disabilities*. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/students/students-with-disabilities>

<sup>12</sup>European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU body or agency) (2020). *Fundamental rights report*. [https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a7ce368c-ab89-11ea-bb7a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en?WT.mc\\_id=Selectedpublications&WT.ria\\_c=41957&WT.ria\\_f=5713&WT.ria\\_ev=search](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a7ce368c-ab89-11ea-bb7a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en?WT.mc_id=Selectedpublications&WT.ria_c=41957&WT.ria_f=5713&WT.ria_ev=search)



- Lack of support and resources in regular universities for student with disabilities;
- Ongoing discrimination against student with disabilities in education and increased numbers of student with special needs in education.

It is important to understand that inclusion and integration are two separate things. Inclusion aims the full participation of all students in the classroom, as it is the process of teaching student in such a way that could benefit all students since all students are learning in a different way. Integration, on the other hand, mainly focuses on absorbing student with special needs in the mainstream education.

Following the integration approach, student with SEN should fit in the mainstream classroom and thus, to accommodate their needs. In the Inclusion approach, it is not enough that the student is in the classroom. He must find in school what he needs to learn and develop, which implies that the school is prepared to receive all students regardless of their characteristics and specificities, as stated and recommended in the declaration of Salamanca in 1994. The focus is also on improving participation, not only for the student with SEN, but also for all other student and to accommodate learner needs. For that, the whole university would need to change.

Professional beliefs and attitudes towards inclusive education are very important, as their beliefs affect decisions regarding students who enter mainstream education. If professionals do not favour inclusion, then more student will just be integrated in mainstream education, rather than be included. It is important when trainings for professionals are designed to address beliefs and attitudes before and after and, in addition, establish a common understanding and clear guidelines towards inclusion.

## 2. Academic Requirements and Reasonable Accommodations/ Adjustments



You, as a Disability support moderator of youth with disabilities, should work towards the academic requirements to be modified as necessary and appropriate to ensure that they do not discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of a disability against qualified applicants or students with disabilities.

As appropriate, modifications may include but are not limited to:

- changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of a requirement,
- substitution for specific courses required, and
- adaptation of the manner in which a required course is conducted.

In addition, we must check if the buildings of a selected by the youth with disability university, are developed/adjusted according to the elements of the accessible environment (entrance and communication spaces, premises and spaces for common use, sanitary-hygienic and auxiliary premises) including:

- stairs, ramps, lifts etc.
- accessible parking spaces
- accessible seats / benches /
- accessible entrance
- accessible lobbies and corridors
- accessible toilets
- accessible and appropriate floor cover.

Academic requirements that are determined to be essential to a program of instruction by a process approved by the university and its academic senate/council and those academic requirements directly related to certification and licensing requirements are not regarded as discriminatory.

Where appropriate, students should also be permitted to provide input into the process of further development of the training. Outcome documentation should include explanation of the academic requirement as well as a diligent assessment of alternatives for achieving the educational goal.

In attempting to make appropriate academic adjustments, faculty members, the staff in services to students with disabilities, Disability support moderators and students/youth with disabilities should work together to develop reasonable accommodations that meet the individual educational needs of qualified students with disabilities while not altering the fundamental nature of the service, program, or/and activity and without creating undue financial or administrative burdens.

During this interactive process, a student with a disability should be given the opportunity to express a preference among possible accommodations and the stated preference should be considered in the process.

The type and amount of support services and accommodations provided to students with disabilities shall be determined by the Rector of each university or designee of the program for students with disabilities, in consultation with the student seeking the accommodation and, as appropriate, with affected faculty and staff. Attendants, individually prescribed devices/assistive technologies, screen readers for personal use, or other devices or services of a personal nature are not required under applicable law.

Accommodations, support services, and programs that are available to those students qualified under particular university may include, but are not limited to:

- Activities to coordinate and administer specialized services, including consultation with faculty for students with special academic needs associated with their disabilities.
- Disability-related counselling and advising, including specialized academic, vocational, and peer counselling.
- Liaisons with campus and community agencies, including referral and follow-up services to these agencies on behalf of students with disabilities.

- Adaptive/assistive technologies (e.g. TTS (text to speech), assistive listening devices, adaptive computer hardware or software) including new devices that may become available with emerging technology.
- Oral and sign language interpreters.
- Note takers for writing, note taking, and manual manipulation for classroom and academic activities.
- On-campus mobility assistance to and from college courses and related educational activities (provided by campuses whose topography and activities require such accommodation).
- Screen readers.
- Registration assistance, including priority enrolment, assistance with applications for financial aid, and related college services.
- Transcription services, including, but not limited to, the provision of taped, large print, and Braille materials.
- Special parking, including on-campus parking registration, temporary parking permit arrangements, and application assistance for students who do not have state plates.
- Supplemental specialized orientation to acquaint students with the campus environment. Test-taking facilitation including extended time, adapting (the mode or presentation but not changing the tests content, scope, or depth) tests for, and proctoring test taking by students with disabilities.
- Campuses may elect to offer specialized tutoring or diagnostic assessment that is not otherwise provided by the campus.
- Additional accommodations, support services, and programs may be provided as determined by the needs of students with disabilities especially caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the youth with disabilities have the right to:

- to require the formation of activities depending on the specific educational needs;

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- to agree on the time for the study sessions between the student group and the lecturer;
- to organize individual consultations with the lecturers by mutual agreement;
- to take exams with an individual protocol after prior agreement with the date of the exam with the respective lecturer;
- to take a semester exam online (for example by ZOOM) - for students with reduced mobility - after submitting an application to the Rector;
- to be transferred to distance learning;
- to be trained according to an individual curriculum.

For those students with disabilities, who would like to be trained only virtually (e-university), there should be an alternative plethora of training opportunities and resources such as:

- Internet based system, providing the following services:
  - e-mail;
  - thematic and process-oriented information;
  - space for information transfer at file level;
  - means of direct communication between network users;
  - specialized forums;
  - calendar of current events;
  - specialized environment for electronic publication of information;
  - providing a personal file;
  - electronic resources from reports and conferences;
  - electronic database of scientific development and publications of teachers, etc.
- Internet based system for e-learning and distance learning with a specialized module to support the learning of target groups of students. The study materials and self-study resources provided to students should include:
  - Lectures, divided into topics in separate files, as well as other materials included (questions, tasks, etc.);

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- Topics for development of term papers / abstracts, cases / and requirements for them;
- List of recommended literature in each discipline;
- Questionnaire (summary) for conducting a semester exam;
- Data for the lecturer;
- Opportunity to conduct online consultations with lecturers;
- Tests online and other information and administrative services;
- Video conference system and a virtual library.

Furthermore, students in need of auxiliary aids and services and reasonable modifications or accommodations should make their requests to the office of services to students with disabilities as early as possible in order to facilitate scheduling or the

acquisition of personnel, equipment, and/or other materials. Responsible persons for the program for students with disabilities shall establish campus guidelines to implement the provision of services.

Students denied a requested accommodation may appeal the decision through on-campus informal and formal dispute resolution processes. Each campus shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for appropriate due-process procedures and for prompt and equitable dispute resolution. Services authorized by the director of the program for students with disabilities must continue during the grievance process.

### 3. Support and advisory team



A system wide support and advisory team on services to students with disabilities shall be established in each university in order to review, evaluate, and recommend educational and administrative policies that address the needs of youth with disabilities. The team shall meet annually as necessary and maintain and make available summary notes of the meetings.

Possible structure of such committee could be:

1. Chair to be appointed by the Rector/two-year term.
2. One Vice-chair for Student and Academic Affairs/two-year term.
3. Two students with disabilities/two-year, overlapping terms.
4. Two Academic council representatives.
5. One representative from the administrative staff.
6. Membership should include representation from a variety of campuses/faculties and disability categories.



Each university shall establish an advisory team on services to students with disabilities to assist in the evaluation of current campus policies and procedures relating to students with disabilities, develop plans relating to programs and services for students with disabilities, recommend priorities, review barrier removal priorities, and develop timelines as defined in each university' transition plan.

Each campus shall provide data annually on enrolment of students with disabilities.

Disability support moderators should work intensively with resource teachers/ tutors / mentors, which should be also determined when forming groups depending on the specific educational needs.

The functions of **Disability support moderators of youth with disabilities** then should include:

- discussion of the content of the course;
- providing feedback on the progress of work;
- grading the tasks by difficulty for the individual students;
- supporting student work plans;
- motivating students;
- supporting the work of students on their individual projects;
- teaching in attendance seminars/webinars;
- consulting on administrative issues.

The Disability support moderators of youth with disabilities also should support:

- the lecturer during the implementation of some consultations, to analyse, summarize and transmit to him the student questions arising in the course of the consultation, to inform the lecturer about the course of the preparation of the students;
- online consultations;

- the independent work of the students, to consult them in the preparation of essays, papers, term papers, etc.;
- the orientation of the students in the degree to which they have mastered the study material, in the organization and planning of their preparation;
- the decision-making of the lecturer for possible corrections emphasis on a specific problem during the consultations, additional video lecture, etc./ in the process of preparing the students;
- the improvement of the motivation of students to learn, to encourage their pursuit of education;
- the publishing information in the e-learning and distance learning platform.

During the training the communication with them is carried out:

- in writing by e-mail;
- in person - during the consultations;
- audio / video - via Skype or ZOOM;
- through the complete integrated system for web-based learning / application of blended learning
- receiving additional materials, questions, assignments, returning finished works, receiving information about the schedule and possible changes in it, as well as communicating with colleagues.

#### 4. Identification of students' needs



In carrying out the assessment of the individual needs of students, the specialists from the above support team should:

- Use assessment methodologies (Methodology for assessment of the educational needs of students, Methodology for functional evaluation and work with students with cognitive disabilities and autistic spectrum of development, Methodology for assessment of the individual needs of students with multiple disabilities), methods for verbal and non-verbal evaluation, which may vary from country to country. In several countries these adjustments may include the use of PECS system, MACATON, together communication, Tadoma method, C-MAP method and other methods, standardization wounds instruments - Test "Binet-Terman" Test Wexler, etc.;
- Take into account the educational and personal achievements of the student;
- Take into account the social and emotional development of the student;
- Use formal and informal methods of monitoring and evaluation;

In accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) International Classification of Functioning of Man, Disability and Health (ICF) and taking into consideration the WHO International Classification of Diseases - ICD 10, the assessment of students is

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carried out with an Individual Needs Assessment Card of the student or the student. It contains the following components:

- Assessment of the functioning of the student;
- An opinion of the team that carried out the assessment of the individual needs for the resources needed for additional support for the personal development of the student;
- Determination of the specificity and type of additional support - short-term or long-term;
- A recommendation to use other services, including social services, or to engage in other activities.

## 5. Universal design of learning – problems and mitigation opportunities



Implementation of a universal design can make learning more accessible. For example, the curriculum can be made more accessible by allowing the student to choose between multiple ways of assessment (writing exam, oral exam, assignment, etc.). There are flexible ways of student engagement in learning, such as the use of multimedia and other techniques, e.g., role playing, using assistive tools in activities (educational robots or voice recorder products, etc.). The teaching content could be presented using oral and visual strategies.

Students should be able to access the material in different forms. For example, providing the material in PDF form makes it accessible for those students who rely on text to speech technologies, or they prefer to convert and print their materials in Braille form. Moreover, students with reading difficulties that prevent them from participating

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should be able to access the material supported with symbols in the place of the words that they struggle to read.

Learning should be supported by actively involving students in activities. For example, using gesture recognition technologies can allow students to interact with a story using full body gestures. A study shows this “maintains excitement among young children, as they are becoming an active part of a story experience”. This method could be beneficial and for those learners who want to be on the move or those who rely on gestures to communicate (Banes et al, 2019).

There are several issues, which should be considered such as:

- Identity, background and ability dictate education opportunities.
- Discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion.
- A key barrier to inclusion in education is the lack of belief that it is possible and desirable.
- While some countries are transitioning towards inclusion, segregation is still prevalent.
- Financing needs to target those most in need.
- Lecturers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity.

Peer collaboration can be very effective among students, but also among lecturers. An environment enabling peer collaboration helps students work in small groups and in pairs. Wealther-Thomas et al. (2000) suggest that “lecturers should be utilizing different teaching methods, such as interactive teaching, using different ways to present, review and monitor instructions”. When there is the option to have extra lecturers, one can teach and the other can monitor specific students (if they follow). Students should be divided in mixed groups and each co-teaching partner should teach the same material to

one of the groups. Lecturers can create teaching stations, with small groups of students rotating to various stations for instructions or practice.

Lecturers can benefit from peer learning, since they can use this method not only during their teaching, as seen above, but also as a general philosophy in their practices. For example, they might have a channel to exchange good practices or to discuss any concerns they have regarding their students. They can use this to exchange educational material and other resources, this being helpful for all the staff, allowing them to gain more knowledge and optimism regarding their cases and inclusive practices.

This could also save them time from creating materials from a scratch or researching for resources.

Peer collaboration allows lecturers to work as a team towards creating a more inclusive environment for all students at university. Together they have more power and might take decisions regarding the structure of their classrooms and the whole university environment to make it more inclusive. *For example*, this can be providing different areas that will support student inclusion. An idea is to use colour coding in certain areas of the university that will mean that one area would be for relaxing (for those students who might feel overwhelmed with the noise), another area would be for gardening, another area would be for sensory activities, etc. Such an environment would allow more students to feel included.

Inclusive teaching is a combination of the range of approaches that consider the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students to create a learning environment where all students feel valued and where all students have equal access to learning.

The learning environment directly correlates with learning outcomes. A student's sense of belonging predicts motivation, engagement, and achievement which evolve around

the learning environment. Incorporating inclusive teaching practices create a learning environment where:

- Lecturers develop supportive relationships with students;
- Lecturers decrease the potential for incivility and unproductive conflict;
- Student participation and engagement increases;
- Students are more likely to take intellectual risks, persist with difficult material and retain learning across contexts.

Lecturers can ask for external support and use alternative materials to make their classrooms more inclusive. Inclusive classroom means not only providing accessibility to students with disabilities but also encourage and motivate other students who do not have disabilities to help their peers and learn together.

Lecturers may struggle to control both groups and sustain harmony among them. However, they can use some informative and practical resources to plan their steps through the inclusive classroom.

Universal Design for Learning <sup>13</sup> helps lecturers to:

- Create a welcoming, respectful learning environment;
- Determine essential course components;
- Communicate clear and high expectations and provide constructive feedback;
- Provide natural supports for learning to enhance opportunities for all learners;
- Use teaching methods that consider diverse learning preferences, abilities, ways of knowing, and prior experience and knowledge;
- Offer multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge;
- Promote respectful interaction among students and between you and the students (e.g. student feedback).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Universal Design for More Inclusive Pedagogy Checklist. <http://ucat.osu.edu/wordpress/assets/UDL-self-assessment-handout.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1999). Development and adaptations of the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *New directions for teaching and learning*, 1999(80), 75-81.



## 6. Competences and attitudes of inclusive teaching/lecturing staff for promoting inclusive teaching



Broader understanding of inclusive education means that universities have to open up for all students, by providing equal and qualitative educational opportunities to meet the needs of all students. Inclusive education requires universities to change and to respond to all learners, namely, those considered 'vulnerable' and 'persons with disabilities'. It implies that lecturers in regular universities must have positive attitudes and believe that all students have the capacity to learn and there are pedagogical means to enable opportunities for all students to learn in a friendly, safe and inclusive environment.

Lecturers have to be positive about their own capacity and they have to be responsible to promote learning for all their students. As it was suggested by Forlin and Chambers (2011), the mainstream university lecturer is the most important component in the success of inclusive education<sup>15</sup>. Rose adds to that saying that lecturers are a crucial element in building more inclusive universities.<sup>16</sup> To work in an inclusive classroom the lecturer needs both a positive attitude towards inclusive education and “knowing about” inclusion, “doing” it and “believing” in it<sup>17</sup>. In other words, a lecturer has to practice inclusive education by “doing” it, “knowing” how to do it and “believing” in what he/she is doing. Rose points out those lecturers should know the following about inclusive education:

- Teaching strategies
- Disability and special needs
- How students learn?
- What students need to learn?
- Classroom organisation and management
- Where to get help when necessary?
- Identifying and assessing difficulties
- Assessing and monitoring students’ learning
- The legislative and policy context

“Doing” means:

- Turning knowledge into action
- Moving beyond reflective practice
- Using evidence to improve practice

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<sup>15</sup> Forlin, C., & Chambers, D. (2011). Teacher preparation for inclusive education: increasing knowledge but raising concerns. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 17-32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2010.540850>

<sup>16</sup> Rouse, M. (2008). Developing inclusive practice: A role for teachers and teacher education? *Education in the North*, 16, 6–13.

<sup>17</sup> Rouse, M. (2008). Developing inclusive practice: A role for teachers and teacher education? *Education in the North*, 16, 6–13.

- Learning how to work with colleagues as well as students
- Becoming an 'activist' professional

Believing in inclusive education means:

- That all students are worth educating
- That all students can learn
- That they have the capacity to make a difference to students' lives
- That such work is their responsibility and not only a task for specialists.<sup>18</sup>

Inclusive lecturers must possess positive attitudes both towards inclusion education, diversity in the classroom, and disability in addition to the content and pedagogical knowledge of inclusive pedagogy. Besides, lecturers have to implement their knowledge into the practice, constantly reflecting on the progress.

Additional support for the personal development may include:

- Psycho-social rehabilitation, hearing and speech rehabilitation, visual rehabilitation, rehabilitation of communicative disorders and physical disabilities;
- Providing accessible architectural, general and specialized support environment, technical facilities, specialized equipment, didactic materials, methodologies and specialists;
- Providing training on special subjects for students with sensory disabilities;
- Resource support.

The inclusion rules, which all people involved in education should respect, are as follows:

- Full inclusion of all students in the classroom activities during the day, both in educational and extra-curricular activities;

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<sup>18</sup> Rouse, M. (2008). Developing inclusive practice: A role for teachers and teacher education? *Education in the North*, 16, 6–13. (p.13, p. 14)

- Resultant and intense levels of communication both in the classroom and during the intervals;
- Day-to-day organization of the classroom;
- Flexible adaptation and modification of the curriculum;
- Individual planning for every day;
- Effective provision of individual support with the resources of general, supplementary and special support;
- Individual application of assistive devices and assistive technologies;
- Working together or performing certain activities (including learning together with "different" students);
- Positive handling of behaviour in extreme/emergency situations.
- In summary, the following highlights apply for each lecturer who works with students with learning difficulties:
  - Different time for teaching and learning for the individual student;
  - Learning with small steps;
  - Learning through more practice and introducing elements of project-based learning;
  - Learning with emotions;
  - Taking into account the student's sensory profile;
  - Taking into account the student's interests;
  - Poly-sensory presentation of information;
  - The instructions are individual to concentrate on the particular student;
  - The amount of the instructions is determined by the needs of the student and not by the administrative requirements (length of lessons, consistency, etc.);
  - The training materials are graded in complexity;
  - At each level of difficulty, the skills are absorbed in fluidity before moving to the next level;
  - At each level, making a connection between various elements being mastered and not adding new themes in a general aspect;

- If possible, introducing "preventable errors" learning to increase student motivation;
- Automatic execution is not allowed;
- Additional resources for general motivation and self-control of students should be added to individual programs;
- Students should be oriented towards understanding and considering the respective tasks;
- Observance of routine and rituals;
- Elimination of additional or occasional irritants;
- Making many reps;
- Adjustments are made at the time of errors;
- Explaining the adjustments;
- Taking into account the little success;
- Resource support;
- Training should be done in interactive, creative and innovative models;
- Training must be safe;
- Inclusion of a family and community context;
- Involvement of volunteers;
- Learning with the use of appropriate aids and assistive technologies.

**No ready-made universal recipes and prescriptions for the individual student with learning difficulties in the class are available**, but when the lecturer complies with the discussed common models, applies his/her competencies and pedagogical experience, the virtuous use of a variety of appropriate learning styles will be present; the lecturer will work with satisfaction with the student with learning difficulties, and this student with learning difficulties will attend the university, will learn with pleasure and the difficulties in the training will be overcome with ease.

## 7. The use of new information technologies in the education process



The use of new information technologies in the education process changes the traditional view of education and leads to:

- Improving education management mechanisms based on the use of automated databases of scientific and pedagogical information;
- Improving the methodology and the strategy for selecting the content, methods and organizational forms of training, corresponding to the tasks of developing the personality of the student in the contemporary conditions of informatisation of society;



- Establishment of methodological training systems aimed at developing the intellectual potential of the student, forming skills for self-acquisition of knowledge, information and training, experimental and research activities;
- Creation and use of computer testing, diagnostics, monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Applying the capabilities of electronic textbooks as a learning tool, subject to training, management and communication tools, information processing tools.

The integration of new information and communication technologies into learning is objectively determined by the need of response to the educational needs of all students who have grown up in a high-tech environment and are active users of high-tech products and services in their day-to-day activities. The characteristics of their perceptions and thinking, formed in information-saturated, multimedia, interactive environments, require new ways of learning and exploring. They have direct access to digital technologies in every aspect of their lives and it is quite natural that this has a huge impact on their behaviour and their way of thinking. This shows that new technologies offer many more opportunities and at the same time, more challenges to pedagogical specialists.

The objectives of the new technologies are aimed at the personal development of each participant in the educational process as follows:

- All participants learn through experience using modern technologies;
- Creating an interactive environment that allows freedom of choice and expression of each student;
- Developing skills for working with computer systems and software and communication skills in the environment of active team collaboration;

- Expanding opportunities for social interaction and cooperative work;
- Respect for individual differences, needs and interests of students.

The use of information and communication technologies increases students' interest in the subject from the educational field, visual presentation of the learning material through multimedia. When working with multimedia programmes, feedback is provided, quick search of the required information, time to record multiple calls to hypertext, together with short text, the explanations are accompanied by a demonstration of animation effects and synchronous conversion.

The modern lecturers have to use new technologies in his/her everyday work by expanding the learning environment beyond the classroom. The university is not just a place where learners have access to new technologies, but it is a space where modern pedagogical methods are used and students' key competencies (skills) are developed.

Lecturers should have the necessary knowledge and skills in the priority areas of education - new technologies and interactive methods. New technologies in education undoubtedly support the process of mastering knowledge and skills. In pedagogical practice, there is a high level of efficiency when the information is used to combine different types of information - text, static graphics, audio and video.

When using information technology in training, the lecturers, in addition to traditional teaching methods and specific methods, can apply the following to increase their teaching and learning experience:

- **Supporting method-** in this method, the technologies are used for increased precision when presenting the work. By using additional programmes, it helps to increase the security and confidence of learners;
- **Method for examination of the control** - Technology helps the student to explore, experiment and build solutions. Simulation software packages enable students to experiment with virtual environments that represent real life in the learning environment;



- **Guiding method** - the information is presented to the learner at the appropriate level and time, enabling feedback on progress in learning. New technologies enable students to engage in new forms of creative design by combining different means into one product;
- **Resource method** - technologies are used to access information, etc. resources, whether online or offline, or other software. Using technology as an information resource enables students to develop their abilities by asking questions and doing research;
- **Linking method** - technologies are used for communication among students.
- The use of these methods by lecturers in the educational process can stimulate and maintain the interest of students in modern training, complementing traditional ones with the benefits of computer and new technologies.

In this context, it can be stated that the use of multimedia resources in the training process has some advantages such as:

- Easy, interesting and accurate presentation of the content of the course material;
- Easy and fast updating of the learning content;
- Increasing the possibility for self-employment and group work;
- Creating a positive motivation for learners to the content;
- Targeting learners towards activities that develop thinking, comparing, generalising, creativity, etc.

## 8. Key questions to consider when planning lectures/lessons/ learning activities



When considering adjustments with the support team at the university, think about the following issues (do not forget first to take the opinion of the youth with disabilities with whom you are working with):

**Think about how learners will engage with the lesson.**

Does the lesson provide options that can help all learners including those with disabilities:

- Regulate their own learning?
- Sustain effort and motivation?
- Engage and interest all learners?

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**Think about how information is presented to learners.**

Does the information provide options that help all learners:

- Reach higher levels of comprehension and understanding?
- Understand the symbols and expressions?
- Perceive what needs to be learned?

**Think about how learners are expected to act strategically & express them.**

Does the activity provide options that help all learners:

- Act strategically?
- Express themselves fluently?
- Physically/virtually respond?

### **What should we consider?**

There is a strong focus on goals. In a UDL classroom, there is a strong focus on learning goals for students. Lecturers and students talk about why those goals matter and how they support challenging, meaningful opportunities to learn. You'll also see students creating their own learning goals.

There is a focus on variability. In a UDL learning environment, differences in experience, knowledge, and ability are expected. Flexible options are built into lessons for all students. That allows you and your students to talk about how different tools or resources support them as they work toward the goal. It also means not all of your students will be doing the same thing at the same time.

There is a focus on the barriers in the design of the environment. In a UDL classroom (either physical or virtual), the focus is on how to change the design of the curricular goals, assessments, methods, and materials — not on how to “fix” the students.

*For example, you may ask:*

*“Why your students are not engaged?” UDL would encourage you to reframe the question: “How can the design of this lesson better engage students?”*

### **Step 1: Proactively design <sup>19</sup>**

Proactive design means that you analyze the goal of the lesson/lecture, anticipate the variability of your students, and add design strategies into the lesson. That way, you can reduce barriers to learning and make sure all students have pathways to achieve the goal. Here’s what that looks like in practice:

#### **Analyze the lesson goal.**

**Why:** We have so many goals for our students. We want them to build content expertise. We want them to build skills, develop socially and emotionally, and also meet curricular standards. One of the most critical parts of planning with UDL is to analyse and understand the different parts of a lesson goal. (Those different parts are the measurable outcomes of the lesson and are sometimes known as objectives.)

**How:** Take one of your curricular standards or objectives and separate the means (how students must demonstrate understanding) from the content (what students need to know).

*For example, imagine a lesson in which your students read about the stages of butterfly metamorphosis and then draw a diagram of the process. This lesson has three main objectives — to have your students read, learn the stages of butterfly metamorphosis, and draw a scientific process. To analyse the goal, you need to identify the primary objective for this part of the lesson.*

All of the lesson’s objectives are important. In the end, you’ll want students to integrate all of them. But planning with UDL requires you to step back and recognize that there are barriers for students in each of these tasks. You can provide support for these barriers.

#### **Consider the following:**

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<sup>19</sup>According to the guidelines provided by <https://www.understood.org/articles/en/lesson-planning-with-universal-design-for-learning-udl>

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If the primary objective is to work on reading comprehension, engaging with the topic could be a barrier. After all, butterfly metamorphosis may not be compelling to all students. Having a few topics to choose from could help students engage and build their reading skills.

If the primary objective is to learn the stages of butterfly metamorphosis, reading a complex text could be a barrier. Because reading is not the essential part of the lesson, there could be a text-to-speech option or a video on the stages of butterfly metamorphosis.

### **Anticipate student variability.**

**Why:** Once you identify the primary objective for a lesson, then you can anticipate that there will be variability in your students. Some may have a lot of background knowledge and skills. Others may still be learning the language or how to use academic vocabulary. Some may struggle to express what they know, or have trouble with focus.

You can create flexible options in the design of the goals, assessments, methods, materials, and environment — and make them available for all your students.

**How:** Design flexible learning options to align with the three broad learning networks of the brain: affective (the “why” of learning), recognition (the “what” of learning), and strategic (the “how” of learning).

To support variability in affective networks, integrate options for engagement, such as:

- Choice boards to recruit interest;
- Options for collaboration to sustain effort and persistence;
- Options for how students can reflect on self-regulation.

To support variability in recognition networks, offer options for representation, such as:

- Visual and auditory options for perception;
- Vocabulary supports for language and symbols;
- Graphic organizers for comprehension;

- See more of what you like and less of what you don't.

To support variability in strategic networks, offer options for action and expression, such as:

- Assistive technology for physical action;
- Flexible ways to draw, record, write, or build for expression and communication;
- Checklists or rubrics for executive functioning skills;
- Add design strategies to reduce barriers.

**Why:** Providing a flexible learning “buffet” of options for students to choose from reduces barriers to learning. These barriers might otherwise prevent students from making progress or engaging in the lesson. With UDL, you make the options available for all students. That’s because you recognize that each student has different preferences, strengths, and challenges that vary based on the given context.

**How:** Reflect on where your students typically get stuck during a lesson or where you tend to have to re-teach. These are the “barriers.” They can help you identify where there might be opportunities to integrate flexible options into your lesson. Identifying specific barriers will help you avoid the problem of having too many options. Make sure your choices align with the skills and knowledge you want students to learn from the lesson.

## Step 2: Implement

This phase involves facilitating the lesson, observing, and getting feedback on how students are building the skills and habits.

### Facilitate and observe.

**Why:** In a UDL environment, your students are invited to take charge of some of their learning decisions. That’s why we say the lessons are “facilitated” instead of “taught.” Students are encouraged to connect learning to real-world issues that matter to them. They’re also invited to show what they know in a variety of ways and build background knowledge to become “expert learners” in the discipline.

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**How:** As you facilitate the lesson, make sure the goal is clear to students. They should understand what they are working to achieve. Give them access to a variety of options of what their work can look like. Explain how those examples show that students have met the lesson goal.

For example, if your students typically struggle with a new concept after you present it, you could make a short video recording of key ideas. Or you could offer a bulleted list of the key ideas. Students can then choose to use one or more of those options. Make sure that there are options regularly available for any student to use as needed.

### **During the lesson/lecture:**

- Observe how students are — or aren't — using the options.
- Work with students to develop a deeper understanding of what they need — or don't need — to achieve the goal.
- Offer process-based feedback to students as they are working. Connect feedback to progress toward the desired goal.

### **Step 3: Reflect and redesign**

The reflection and redesign phase allows you to consider your next instructional moves.

**Why:** This kind of formative assessment can help you plan upcoming lessons and deepen the learning experience for your students.

**How:** At the end of the lesson/lecture, collect feedback from students about how they made progress, what supported their learning, and where they got stuck. Take a look at student work and feedback, too. Don't forget to use your own observations of the lesson to reflect.

Ask yourself:

- Was the goal meaningful and challenging? Did students know what the goal and objectives were so they could make progress?
- Did the lesson design anticipate variability? How was there a range of engagement, background understanding, and skills? Were there flexible options

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available for engagement, representation, and action and expression that students could choose?

- Could the lesson design further reduce barriers? Where students were still stuck or frustrated? Where did you have to reteach? Can you identify one or two new ideas you could integrate into the design of the lesson next time? How could you collaborate with other teachers and invite discussion with students for ideas to help reduce the barriers, and increase the challenge and meaning of the goal?



## 9. How to implemented successful distance learning by using UDL best practices for online learning?



Many universities have moved to distance learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Universities are taking many different approaches. Some are providing synchronous (real-time) virtual learning via videoconference technology. Others are trying fully asynchronous (not real-time) learning through documents and worksheets designed to enhance at-home learning.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>According to the research on topic “Understood's resources for educators are backed by research, vetted by experts, and reviewed by classroom teachers” by Gabrielle Rappolt-Schlichtmann, EdD

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Whatever the approach, distance learning can be a challenge. Teachers/lecturers and students will need time and practice to get used to it. It may feel daunting to include all students when your classroom is a videoconference.

Luckily, the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can help. When you plan with UDL in mind, you proactively reduce barriers to learning so all the students in your class can engage.

### **Here are some best practices for distance learning with UDL.**

#### **1. Explicitly teach expectations and engagement.**

Video and distance learning is a totally different medium of teaching and learning. Both lecturers and students especially those with disabilities may need time and support to learn how to learn and engage effectively in this space.

Assume that students have a wide range of skills when it comes to technology for virtual learning. That includes learning with digital materials and connecting for learning through virtual conferencing. And the technology students have access to for distance learning will vary.

Explicitly and systematically guide how to use new instructional media. Co-create and share expectations for how to engage in this learning environment. Give opportunities for practice.

Know, too, that there will be a learning curve for everyone. It may take some time and repeated support for all students to get the hang of how to interact and learn in this new environment.

#### **2. Allow for asynchronous learning.**

Some of your students may not be able to watch a live stream, whether it's due to timing, internet access, or the ability to focus on a lesson via a videoconference. And some students have trouble processing information when it's presented only in auditory form.

If you're delivering live instruction via video, record it for students to review or access later. You can upload the video to a space like Google Classroom or send it to your students via email.

You can also use apps like [Otter.ai](#) to generate transcripts from your audio. (Otter.ai offers 600 minutes of transcription free per month.) Other video streaming applications offer live captioning, which may be imperfect, but definitely useful.

### **3. Assign note-takers.**

It's harder for many students to "watch" instruction via video live stream than in a live classroom. It can be challenging to focus, feel connected, process information, and identify key ideas.

More experienced students can work together to help each other. Consider assigning students to take notes for the class using Google Classroom applications.

Along with transcripts and recordings, good notes are important and helpful to all students. They're especially helpful to students who have trouble with focus, reading, writing, and other challenges that make it difficult to multitask.

### **4. Make materials accessible.**

It's not just video that needs to be accessible. Think, too, about how to make images and digital documents available for all students to access. Here are some best practices to use when creating materials.

Create short text descriptions of images and videos you use during video and distance learning.

Avoid using inaccessible image-based PDFs for handouts and other digital materials. Use Word, Google Docs, or another accessible format instead. (Those formats have optical character recognition (OCR) for screen reader access.)

If you're not already using these practices in your classroom, try to approach this situation as an opportunity to learn how to be accessible for all. Once you get used to doing it, it's easy to bring these practices into everyday, live learning settings.

### **5. Embrace students as teachers.**

You can provide them with a sketch and initial thoughts about how you think learning and teaching might work virtually, but create activities that let students provide feedback on your plans. Give them the chance to co-create what teaching and learning will look like now that you're all working remotely.

Communication is extra important when you're working at a distance. Ask your students regularly about their needs and be ready to be flexible and responsive to their concerns.

Remember that many students are digital natives. Ask about their preferences and innovative ideas on how to approach online learning. This supports learner agency, self-determination, and motivation to learn in this environment.

### **6. Actively build a supportive community.**

When you're not in a classroom together, it's not as easy to check in with students about their emotional and physical well-being. Build time into your teaching and learning to reduce social isolation and support feelings of connectedness and belonging.

Integrate small group video discussions (in addition to the whole group) and use discussion boards for older students.

Some video applications, like Zoom, allow you to create separate "rooms" for breakout discussions. *(Zoom is temporarily lifting the 40-minute time limit on free basic accounts for universities affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. Learn more about how to get access for your university.)*

If possible, try to set up weekly (or more frequent) individual virtual check-ins or short phone calls with each of your students. Most of all, encourage engagement to help your students feel like they have agency in this online space. After all, this is their learning community, too.

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**There are three principles to consider within a UDL approach:**

- Engagement and the why of learning
- Representation and the what of learning
- Action and expression and the how of learning

Here are some ways to use these UDL principles before, during, and after each online lesson, which you as a Disability support moderator may suggest to the lectures and academicians:

### **Before online lessons**

Planning is a must when using UDL in online learning. Plans will help you be more responsive to all students' needs.

Make sure that lecturers and academicians think about how they design physical classroom to be accessible to all. They should think about how to design online learning space with the same goal in mind. For instance, how are you displaying information to make sure students and families can easily locate it?

They need to consider what technology they can use in the lesson. Keeping in mind that prepping technology may take longer than expected, especially if they are still getting comfortable with it.

*Strategies, which you may suggest to lecturers and academicians, are:*

- Set aside time to explicitly teach about the technology you'll use. Give students time to explore the online learning environment just as they would explore a physical classroom during an orientation or open house.
- Anticipate any misconceptions or questions students might have about a lesson's tasks, materials, or technology. Proactively address them with readily available and accessible resources.
- Think about the pacing of lessons in the online setting. Plan for how you can use scheduled breaks during instruction and work time.

- Check the accessibility of materials you create or use. For example, check to see if you can include captioning or speech-to-text for students who benefit from reading content. Or you can try virtual math manipulatives for those who benefit from visual representations.
- See more of what you like and less of what you don't

### **During online lessons**

Rather than taking a “one size fits all” approach for presenting information, offer different options as you teach online. Giving students meaningful choices can help them engage with the content. These choices can also motivate students to learn in challenging or new situations like online learning.

To offer choice in an online setting, you'll need to rely on the features of the technology you're using, like breakout rooms, discussion boards, screen captures, and chat boxes. When you collaborate with other staff members, including co-teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals, you can use one-on-one or small group meetings to offer students different options for learning.

*Strategies, which you may suggest to lecturers and academicians, are:*

- Provide choices for how students can interact online. For example, you might allow students to decide whether to join live video lessons with their video on or off. Students who have anxiety might benefit from being able to choose to keep their video off.
- Offer options for how students can engage with the content. You can offer a choice board so students can choose to listen to a podcast, watch a video, or read an article about the topic.
- Give students some control over how and when they engage in the work. For instance, you can record your live video lessons so students can choose to re-watch all or parts of the session.

- Be open-minded about the format that students' work can take—from text documents to visual arts products.

### **After online lessons**

Since online learning is new for many teachers and students, take time to reflect after your lessons. You and your students can think about the roles you played in a lesson, and how those roles work together.

*Strategies, which you may suggest to lecturers and academicians, are:*

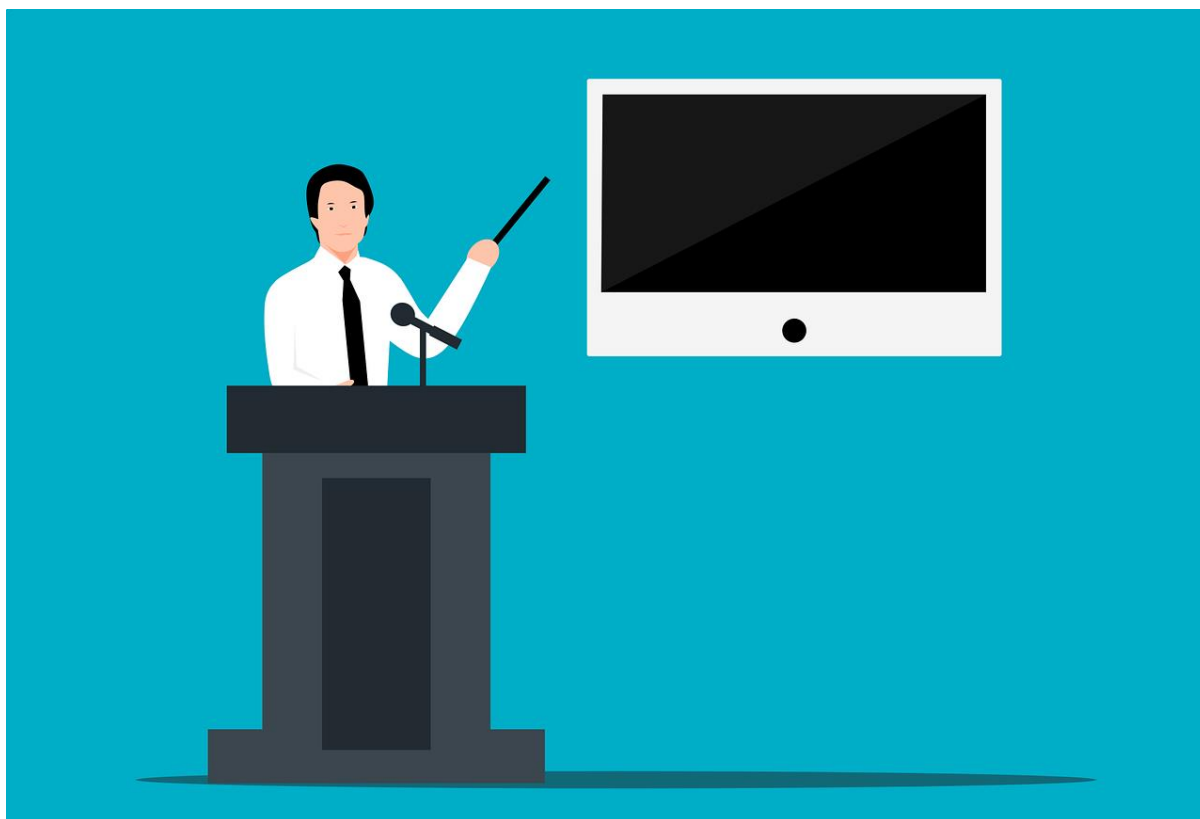
- Help students reflect on their strengths and needs when learning online. They can keep a list of which online learning features and strategies best support those strengths and needs.
- Allow students to co-create approaches for online learning activities. Students may know about different technology that you're still learning about. This is a good chance to build on students' strengths and empower them in their learning.
- Learn about ways you can improve your virtual instruction by asking students what they think. Use surveys, rubrics, or journaling to give students a chance to assess their own learning and give you feedback about your teaching.
- Share your insights with other teachers and staff members. Helping students' better access their learning is a shared responsibility among university staff.

### **Putting it all together**

UDL can seem daunting if you try to cover every single aspect of it all at once, especially when you're new to using it with online learning. Begin with a few strategies and be consistent with implementation. This will make your new practices become habits.

By proactively planning for accessibility and variability, you'll be more prepared to welcome many different learning and thinking needs in your physical or virtual classroom.

## 10. Guidelines for accessibility in preparation of visualised content



We think taking into account the accessibility issues is important before the preparation of the exact content for any kind of training material in order to ensure the full accessibility for all people (no matter students or teachers/lecturers).

Therefore, coming from consortium' practice and the strong research in the area conducted by Nottingham Trent University in UK<sup>21</sup>, in the past years we are suggesting common standard to ensure "clear text for all" approach as following:

- **Point size.** Minimum 12 point, 14 point ideal
- **Contrast.** For blind and partially sighted, black on white; for dyslexic, dark blue on pale blue, or black on yellow; avoid light text on dark background

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<sup>21</sup> Text formats and web design for visually impaired and dyslexic readers—Clear Text for All Lindsay Evett\*, David Brown, Interactive Systems Research Group, School of Computing and Informatics, The Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU, UK

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- **Colour.** Avoid green, red/pink
- **Type face.** Sans serif is preferred for both the blind and partially sighted and for dyslexics, e.g. Arial, Universe, New Century Schoolbook, Comic Sans
- **Type styles.** Avoid capitals, underlining and italicised text; use bold to highlight, rather than italic or underline
- **Leading space.** 1.5–2
- **Type weight.** Avoid light type weights
- **Alignment.** Left; avoid justified text—the uneven spacing is difficult for both dyslexics and those with sight problems
- **Line length.** Between 60 and 70 letters per line; lines that are too short or too long tire the eyes. The same applies to sentence and paragraph length
- **Paragraphs.** Extra line(s) between
- **Columns.** Clear margin between columns; if space does not allow, use a vertical rule
- **Setting text.** Avoid fitting text around images if that means that lines start in different places. Set text horizontally rather than vertically. Avoid setting text over images; do not start sentences at ends of lines
- **Paper.** Avoid glossy paper, and paper that is so thin that it allows text to show through from the reverse side (paper weight over 90 GSM); avoid folding paper where creases may obscure the text
- **Writing style.** Short simple sentences, clear and concise