

Strategies for inclusive teaching Checklist

Supporting documentation to the webinar on accessibility

Jean-Pascal Beaudoin, Educational Development Specialist

© March 2018

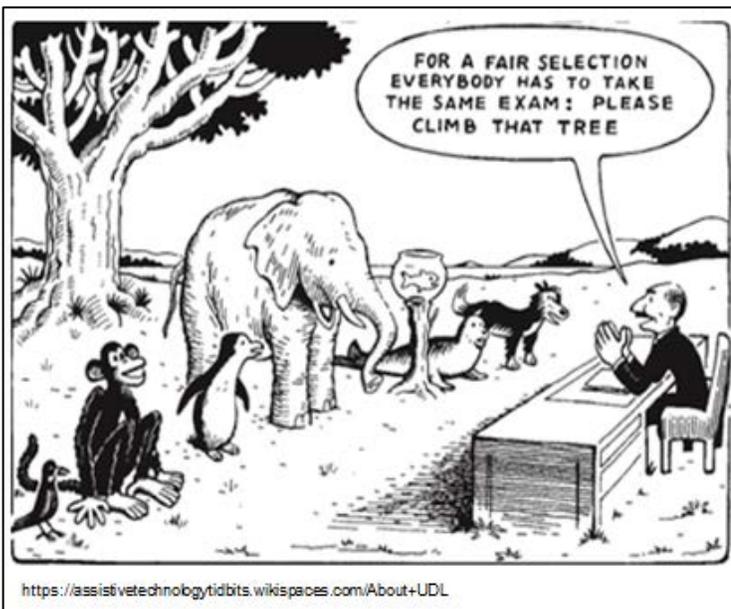
There are many strategies and resources available to support accessibility and inclusion, as per information found on the [University of Ottawa accessibility hub website](#) (under Inclusive teaching). These strategies can be summarized into four major groups:

Strategy 1: Educators Ask Themselves Questions about Goals, Learning Needs and Teaching

Methods: clarify expectations and distinguish between essential learning and non-essential information. When designing your course, integrate strategies linked to inclusive practices.

Strategy 2: Active Learning and Use of a Variety of Teaching Methods: vary the way you present information (audio, video, graphs, online, podcast); and structure/format each class (rhythm and type of learning activities).

Strategy 3: Offer Choices as to How Students Can Demonstrate their Understanding of the Content (Evaluation): vary the type of assessment per semester or project (ex: dissertation vs. blog; oral presentation vs. video).



“Following are some steps to start you on your way toward applying universal design elements to your own assessments:

- Clearly articulate the decisions you want to make about students’ skills and knowledge from the test or assignment. (...)
- Think about how students can best demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a way that will help you make decisions. (...)
- Identify the access skills needed to successfully interpret and respond to assessment items. (...)
- Design a task (test or assignment) that will allow you to make the decisions you want to make. (...)

- Explicitly state the expectations for students and which skills you will and will not be evaluating. (...)
- Design the scoring guide or rubric with the decisions in mind. Tell students what you are trying to measure. (...)” (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008, pp.77-79).

And at a more technical level:

- “Are the instructions on this assessment easy for students to understand?”
- Is the layout of the assessment easy to navigate?
- Are items formatted consistently throughout the assessment?
- Is the language I am using in the assessment appropriate for the students in my classroom? Will students understand the vocabulary associated with information not directly related to the coursework?
- Is the print large and legible enough for all students to read? Are diagrams clear and consistent with text?
- Can the assessment be taken in a variety of formats (e.g., paper, computer-based)?
- Can a potential allowable accommodation for a student be used on this assessment without changing the constructs of what I am testing?” (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008, p.76).

Strategy 4: Provide Accessible Written or Online Materials in PDF, MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel:

this allows blind or visually impaired people, among others, to use speech synthesis software, also known as screen readers. More specifically:

- Use the “Alt Text” function for images, tables, and graphics, and the “accessibility check” function when preparing written documents to ensure that the speech synthesis software can capture the information being transmitted.
 - Prepare clear and structured written documents to facilitate comprehension of people who have attention deficit disorders, or who have difficulty processing information, among others.
 - Use toned-down animations and provide sufficient contrast between background and text in PowerPoint presentations.
 - Present captioned videos, or offer a transcript of content for audio or video materials.
- Offer alternative ways for students to access the material from online learning platforms (for ex.: Virtual Campus, e-voting, video-conferencing, lecture capture), as their navigation pane, chats, some documents and videos can present accessibility challenges, specifically for students who are blind or who can’t use a mouse. As temporary measures until such platforms evolve, you could
 - Add a notice in the syllabus.
 - Offer to send pedagogical material by e-mail upon request.
 - Allow students to work in pairs during class time.
 - Meet with the student to answer their questions.

- Allow the student's support personnel to attend class, whether online or face to face.
- To find additional information, consult the [uOttawa accessibility hub website](#) online self-training modules on accessible documents or the slide show from the Human Rights Office workshop "Creating Accessible Pedagogical Material" (under Accessibility trainings).

Other useful strategies to benefit all students:

- Add a paragraph on the topic of inclusion in the course syllabus; refer to it during the first class (establishment of trust);
- Provide lecture outlines to students before class to help them structure their work and plan their note-taking or their learning strategies (a summary or a table of contents should suffice: it doesn't have to take the form of course notes or a PowerPoint presentation);
- Whenever possible, use a microphone in class;
- When you make an important announcement in class, also inform your students by email or with a post on Virtual Campus;
- Encourage group work in class, during labs, and during work sessions;
- Audio or video record your lectures, and edit and post short audio or video clips on Virtual Campus, allowing students to review more complex content;
- Structure teaching: Put the day's lecture in context; repeat or summarize during class (ex: after the break, or at the end of class);
- Vary learning activities: mini-lessons (20 minutes maximum), discussions, case studies, have students work in smaller groups and compare notes, etc.;
- Face students when you speak; look at them; be aware of what is happening in the classroom environment (pace, comprehension), of the class dynamic (including student-instructor interactions), and make the necessary adjustments after having validated your perceptions with your students;
- Encourage student participation: ask questions at regular intervals, use think-pair-share, small groups activities, one-minute-questions or reflections;
- Repeat questions asked by students during class so that everyone can hear;
- Give examples from real life; Make sure they are relevant to a wide variety of students;
- Explain new concepts or provide a glossary; Provide tutorials and additional resources;
- Verbally describe projected images and graphics or what you write on the board (or use of electronic overhead projectors);
- Link assessments to learning outcomes and differentiate between what is essential to know and what is supplementary;
- Provide ample time between assessments to provide your students with useful feedback;
- Give students a rubric which outline the evaluation criteria for each of their assessments;
- Allow students to submit work either electronically or in-print;
- Use online quizzes with automated feedback;
- Encourage team work through social media, Skype, chat, etc.;
- Use mid-semester student feedback to make adjustments to your teaching throughout the course;
- Summarize your lecture at the end of class and encourage students to ask questions to verify their understanding; begin the next class with feedback;
- Follow up with students who appear to be struggling.

Contact Information

Should you need more information or support in integrating inclusive practices to your teaching, please contact the Center for University Teaching at your convenience at saea-tlss@uOttawa.ca or at 613-562-5333.

Useful Resources

- ▶ Burgstahler, S., & Cory, R. (2008). *Universal design in higher education: from principles to practice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- ▶ [Educators Accessibility Tool Kit](#) - Council of Ontario Universities (COU).
- ▶ Support Service for Accessibility issues:
 - ▶ Computing Help Centre: web form or 6555
 - ▶ Human Rights Office: Marie-Claude Gagnon, extension 7452
- ▶ Minimizing the impact of learning obstacles: [A guide for professors](#) – SASS, University of Ottawa.
- ▶ [Online modules for accessible documents and websites](#) – University of Ottawa.
- ▶ [Implementation Checklist for Inclusive Teaching Practises](#) – adapted from University of Guelph, under 'Inclusive teaching', under 'Material on...'

Contact

Jean-Pascal Beaudoin
CPU-CUT@uOttawa.ca
613-562-5800 (5333)

