



How to Prepare for Diverse Learners  
in the Classroom and on Campus:

# Universal Design

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- Developed in the early 1970s by Ronald Mace, the founder of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University
- An approach from the fields of architecture and design
- “[It] is the design of products and environments, to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without need for adaptation or special design.”

-- Ron Mace, The Center for Universal Design

<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/>

## Universal Design entails:

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- awareness of human diversity
- anticipation of a variety of needs
- an intentional approach to designing an inclusive environment

## Why UDI?

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Approaching instruction and diversity from a holistic perspective provides a more cohesive instructional environment for a broad range of students

## UDI Principles

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- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for Error
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Approach and Use
- A Community of Learners
- Inclusive Instructional Climate

## Diversity at MCC

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- Ethnic, Cultural and Racial Diversity
- Socioeconomic Diversity
- English Language Learners
- Students with Disabilities
- First Generation College

Students bring multiple experiences, abilities, strengths and weaknesses to the classroom.

## How does UDI meet students' needs?

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- Provides for inclusiveness
- Addresses abilities and disabilities
- Provides options for student engagement and success

## The application of UDI can engage and empower students by:

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- providing multiple representations of content
- helping students have access to course materials
- providing multiple options to prove competency in course content



## Multiple Representations of Content

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- Pictures, diagrams, & graphic organizers aid in developing content-related vocabulary
- Handouts, notes, & slide printouts augment lectures
- Podcasts and video streaming of lectures help in review of content
- Video (with closed captions), LCD and overheads help engage students and emphasize key content
- Web links offer additional experiences with content

# Teaching Strategies

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- Clearly convey goals and objectives for the class session
- Use scaffolding techniques – review before moving forward; link concepts to previously learned material
- Cue to allow for adequate processing
- Model good notetaking:
  - Use whiteboard – present info in organized fashion
  - Provide guided notes or outline for student completion
  - Develop PowerPoint slides – use outlining format

## More Teaching Strategies

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- Reinforce written material verbally;  
Reinforce verbal information in writing
- Post online versions of syllabus and class materials
- In addition to lecturing, regularly include:
  - Inquiry-based activities
  - Case studies
  - Guest speakers
  - Field trips, including virtual (web) trips
- Bring closure to each session by summing up important points and concepts

## Classroom Strategies

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- Minimize distractions (both visual & auditory)
- Establish routines and clear expectations
- Design seating to support buddy system
- Acknowledge and plan for preferential or specific seating needs
- Speak facing the class at all times
- Arrange seating to enhance communication
- Pair students who might benefit from each other's strengths

## Assessment Design

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Use multiple methods of determining student competency.

These might include:

- Rubrics to set clear standards for evaluation
- Portfolios
- Student presentations (group or individual)
- Video or web-based reports or presentations
- Multiple-format tests (allow for student choice)
- Research or reflective papers

Consider offering students various options for demonstrating competency and knowledge acquisition.

## Student access to materials

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Offer students multiple means of access to course materials and content:

- Explain purpose & encourage use of office hours
- Post materials, syllabus, & resources on Blackboard
- Create your own website
- Put course materials on reserve
- Make books & syllabus available in advance
- Allow for audio taping
- Choose books with accompanying CD or website link
- Learn about available assistive technologies

## Universal Design in Practice

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- Reflects good pedagogy
- Respects all learners
- Benefits people of all learning styles
- Eliminates the need for adapting or retrofitting
- Supports creative teaching
- Invigorates curriculum
- Enhances opportunities for student engagement

# MCC Resources

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## Disability Support Services

- On the portal: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/DisabilityServices/](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/DisabilityServices/)
- Lowell Office:  
Lowell City, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 978-656-3258
- Bedford Office:  
Enrollment Ctr., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 781-280-3630

## Technology Center

- On the portal: <https://mymcc.middlesex.mass.edu/>
- Help Desk: <https://helpdesk@middlesex.mass.edu>  
978-656-3301



# MCC Resources

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## **Academic Support Center**

- On the portal: <https://mymcc.middlesex.mass.edu/>, under Student Services
- Lowell location:  
Lowell City, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 978-656-3364
- Bedford location:  
Academic Resource, Bldg. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 781-280-3724

## **MCC Library**

- Lowell location:  
Federal Building, 978-656-3004
- Bedford location:  
Academic Resource, Bldg 1, 781-280-3708

## UDI Resources on the Web

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- [http://adaptiveenvironments.org/neada/site/student\\_videos](http://adaptiveenvironments.org/neada/site/student_videos): personal stories and information on disability accommodation in higher education
- [http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu/files/udi2\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu/files/udi2_fact_sheet.pdf): for an overview of Universal Design for Instruction
- <http://blackboardsupport.calpoly.edu/content/about/accessible.html>: application of UDI principles in developing a Blackboard site
- <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Faculty/Strategies/Universal/>: specific strategies for employing Universal Design principles
- <http://ada.osu.edu/resources/fastfacts/index.htm>: info on developing accessible web content, guided notes, teaching strategies, UDI