

Course Syllabi with Language about Universal Design, Accessibility, and/or Inclusion

Example Syllabi Language about UDL and/or Accessibility

EnACT~PTD. (n.d.). *UDL-Universe: A comprehensive universal design for learning faculty development guide*. Retrieved from

<http://enact.sonoma.edu/content.php?pid=218878&sid=2032318>

- In the right-hand menu titled “UDL Syllabus Statement,” there is an example: “As your instructor, I feel I have a responsibility to do everything within reason to actively support a wide range of learning styles and abilities. As such, I have taken training and applied the principles of Universal Design for Learning to this course. Feel free to discuss your progress in this course with me at any time. In addition, if you require any accommodations, submit your verified accommodations form to me during the first two weeks of the course.”

Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. (2011). *Sample syllabus statements regarding disabilities*. Retrieved from

http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/syllabus_disabilities.html

- This website contains example syllabus disability statements, including a “Statement on Discrimination and Harassment” and “Statement of Disability Accommodations.”

Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Statements*. Retrieved from

<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Syllabus/statements.php#disabilityaccess>

- Sample accessibility statement: “It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SDS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sds@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.”

Sample, M. (2013, September 9). Accessibility statements on syllabuses. *The Chronicle of Higher Education: ProfHacker*. Retrieved from

http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/accessibility-statements-on-syllabuses/52079?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

- In this brief article, Mark Sample points readers to the “Suggested Practices for Syllabus Accessibility Statements” wiki by Tara Woods and Shannon Madden (cited below). Sample also includes his revised accessibility statement (which is framed in terms of universal learning), and explains why he changed its location to appear near the beginning of his syllabus. Here is his accessibility statement:

“I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning.

Any student with particular needs should contact [Name], the Academic Access and Disability Resources Coordinator, at the start of the semester. The Dean of Students’ office will forward any necessary information to me. Then you and I can work out the details of any accommodations needed for this course.”

Valencia College. (2012). *Distance Learning*. Retrieved from <http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/distancelearning/>

- Valencia College includes the following “Accessibility” statement on their “Distance Learning” page:
“Valencia strives to provide online courses that are fully accessible to students with disabilities by employing the principles of Universal Design for Learning. These principles are achieved by promoting the idea that students with disabilities fall along a continuum of learner differences rather than constituting a separate category of learners. Instructional designers work with faculty to assist in making their online courses accessible to all students, regardless of disability.”

Wood, T., & Madden, S. (2013). *Suggested practices for syllabus accessibility statements*. Retrieved from

http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/index.php/Suggested_Practices_for_Syllabus_Accessibility_Statements

- This website describes the importance of disability statements, encourages faculty to develop their own, and prompts them to consider the placement of the statement in their syllabus. In addition, the site includes numerous examples of disability and UDL statements. For example, the statement below blends a description of UDL and a recommendation to register with an office of disability resources:
 - “In the spirit of Universal Design for Learning, I will strive to provide an environment that is equitable and conducive to achievement and learning for all students. I ask that we all be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members, regardless of personal attribute. I encourage persons with disabilities or particular needs that impact on performance to meet with me to co-design accommodations, if necessary, beyond those listed under UDL. I ask that we all use inclusive language in written and oral work. Students with disabilities may also want to register with the Office of Disability Resources, located at _____.”

Example Syllabi with UDL principles

Beinecke, R. H. (2008). *HLTH 832AE: U.S. health policy*. Retrieved from www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/beinecke_syllabus.doc

- This syllabus features a link to the professor’s resume, a campus map, and links to “more information” about the course assignments.

Doe, P. (n.d.). *Expository writing: Exploding the nuclear family*. Retrieved from <http://www.communityinclusion.org/udl/ex1.html>

- This web-based syllabus features annotations, hyperlinks, a visual calendar with office hours, etc. The webpage also includes a link to [a text-only version](#).

Emory University. (n.d.). *Model universal design for instruction syllabi*. Retrieved from http://www.portals.emory.edu/emory_udi_syllabi.html

- This website contains PDFs of syllabi from a variety of disciplines that demonstrate some UDI principles. Under each syllabus author, there is a bulleted list of UDI features present in the syllabus. The example syllabi have the following course titles: [American Education](#); [Classics of Educational Thought](#); [Violence and Memory in Contemporary Africa](#); [Coffee and Chocolate: Anthropological Perspectives](#); [Library Skills Training Component to Freshmen Seminars](#); [Concepts and Methods in Cultural Anthropology](#); [Introduction to Film](#); [Gender, Race, and Political Representation in the U.S.](#); [Introduction to Probability and Statistics](#); [Infant Development](#); and [Mind and Body in China](#).

EnACT~PTD. (n.d.). *UDL-Universe: A comprehensive universal design for learning faculty development guide*. Retrieved from

<http://enact.sonoma.edu/content.php?pid=218878&sid=2032318>

- In the right-hand menu titled “Visually Enhanced Syllabi,” there are links to PDF copies of sample syllabi that feature interesting visual elements. Please note, though, that many of these examples would also need to be complemented by HTML-only versions (for accessibility reasons) and that the disability statements included do not contain language about “accessibility” or “universal learning.” Here are the sample syllabi:
 - [Art Appreciation](#)
 - [Senior Marketing Internship](#) (compare to [the original syllabus](#))
 - [U.S. History II](#)
 - [Fundamentals of Biological Anthropology](#)
 - [Composition](#)

Gragoudas, S., Hart, D., & Behling, K. (2006). Form A: 2006 special education institutes summary information. Retrieved from

http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/summ_inst_ud_syl.pdf

- This syllabus features a visual concept map of the course, hyperlinks to external resources and course descriptions, and a color-coded calendar.

Haven, V. C., & Behling, K. T. (2007). *Designing for inclusion: Introduction to accessible technologically-mediated instruction*. Retrieved from

http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/valerie_ucd_syll.pdf

- This syllabus features photos of the professors and the campus, links to external resources, and images of the required texts.

Herschbach, E., Culpepper, G., Lloyd, C., & Hogan, W. (2008). *Development of western civilization*. Retrieved from

www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/w_civ_UCD_civ.doc

- This syllabus features a campus map, a table showing students where they can access course texts, a graphic representation of the course goals and assignments, highlighted dates on the course calendar, and a disability statement.
- The disability statement reads: “The mission statement of Providence College states that the College ‘...encourages the deepest respect for the essential human dignity, freedom, and equality of every person...’ Providence College is also committed to providing students with disabilities equal access to programs, facilities, services, and activities at the College. The College will make every effort to provide “reasonable accommodations” so that students can be ensured equal access and work to remove any barriers which may prevent this from occurring. For more information, please contact the Office of Academic Services, Phillips Memorial Library at 401-865-2494 or oas@providence.edu.”

(n.d.). *Human movement lab 1*. Retrieved from

http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/hum_mov_labs.pdf

- This syllabus features photographs, figures, and links to external resources.

Moor, S., & Allan, O. (2005). *Education 750-850: Introduction to exceptionality*. Retrieved from http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/exampl_syll.pdf

- This syllabus features images, hyperlinks, and a color-coded calendar.

Pedersen, J. (2006). *Building healthy communities: A partnership with the city of Escondido*. Retrieved from

www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/ucd_service_learning_syllabus.doc

- This syllabus features photographs, hyperlinks, and a visual concept map of the course description.

Shelton, L. (2007). *Human development*. Retrieved from

http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/larry_syll.pdf

- This course syllabus include images of the course website and meeting room, as well as links to external resources, a more detailed (text-only) syllabus, and mp3 recordings of past lectures.

Turner, J. (2005). *EDU205: Technology in education*. Retrieved from

www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/sampl_courses/tech_in_educat.doc

- This syllabus features a campus map and a visual of the “value of technology.”

Tips and Rubrics for Designing UDL/Accessible Course Materials

Aase, S. A., Alexander, I. D., Kamenar, T., & Martin, K. (n.d.). *Incorporating universal design principles in the development, delivery, and assessment of your instruction* [Presentation slides]. Retrieved from

http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/@ctl/documents/asset/ohr_asset_366203.pdf

- On slide 21, the authors list some considerations for designing a course syllabus:
 - Present information in two or more formats (e.g., text and audio)
 - Give as many resources as possible
 - Provide background information and context
 - Build in flexibility (of materials, of activities, of assessment)
 - Incorporate digital elements
 - Be brief
- On slide 26, the authors list nine principles of UDI (Universal Design for Instruction). These principles are based on the University of Connecticut’s “[Examples of UDI in Online and Blended Courses](#)”:
 - 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
 - instructional climate
- On slide 27, the authors provide UDI examples and links to external resources

Behling, K. (n.d.). Universally designing a syllabus. *Equity and Excellence in Higher Education: Universal Course Design*. Retrieved from <http://media.umb.edu/syllabustutorial/>

- This online tutorial includes descriptions of how to design each part of a traditional syllabus—including the title, instructor information, list of required course texts, and course schedule—in a universally acceptable way. The tutorial also includes examples from a sample syllabus.

California State University, Chico. (2009). *Rubric for online instruction*. Retrieved from <http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/>

- This rubric was designed to “assist in the design and evaluation of online or blended courses.” The six domains this rubric covers are: learner support and resources, online organization and design, instructional design and delivery, assessment and evaluation of student learning, innovative teaching with technology, and faculty use of student feedback.
- For the purposes of designing a syllabus with UDL principles, the domain of “instructional design and delivery” might be useful. According to the rubric, an “exemplary” course would be designed with the following:
 - “ample opportunities for interaction and communication [in] student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content [modes]”
 - clearly defined (and aligned) course goals and learning objectives

- learning activities that are aligned with learning objectives
- “multiple visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning”
- “multiple activities that help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills”
- An explanation of the rubric’s six domains can be found here:
http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/the_rubric.shtml
- A PDF copy of the rubric can be found here:
<http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/documents/rubricpdf>

EnACT~PTD. (n.d.). *Course accessibility checklist*. UDL-Universe. Retrieved from <http://enact.sonoma.edu/content.php?pid=218878&sid=2032869>

- This checklist includes questions faculty should ask themselves (in a self-check fashion) as they design and submit their syllabi. These questions include “Do my Word documents pass the grade according to the Word Accessibility Tips and Guidelines?” and “Do my PDF documents pass the grade according to the PDF Accessibility Checklist?” These questions also include links to the appropriate resources.
- Sacramento State’s guide to Word accessibility:
<http://www.csus.edu/atcs/tools/instructional/documents.stm>
- California State University’s guides and checklists for accessible Word documents:
http://teachingcommons.cdl.edu/access/docs_multi/wordf2f.shtml
- San Francisco State University’s Microsoft Word and Adobe tutorials:
http://www.sfsu.edu/access/training/instruc_documents/index.html

EnACT~PTD. (2012). *Universal design for learning: A rubric for evaluating your course syllabus*. Retrieved from http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/2205/289066/UDL_Syllabus_Rubric_UPDATED_2-9-2012.pdf

- This rubric describes three levels of universal design principles for syllabi—from a “traditional” syllabus to an “enhanced” syllabus and finally an “exemplary” syllabus—based on eleven elements: the instructor’s contact information; a list of required textbooks and materials; a description of course objectives, assignments, and due dates; explanations of how to complete and submit course assignments; a description of grading criteria and rubrics; a course calendar; a list of other campus resources; and the length, format, and visibility of the syllabus document.
- For an explanation of the rubric and how to use it, visit:
<http://enact.sonoma.edu/content.php?pid=218878&sid=2032318>

Folkins, J. (1992). Resource on person-first language: The language used to describe individuals with disabilities. *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*. Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/publications/journals/submissions/person_first.htm

- This online resource explains five principles for using language to describe and address individuals with disabilities. These principles are:
 - Use person-first language
 - Do not replace “person-nouns” with “disability-nouns.”

- It is better to use the “to have” verb than the “to be” verb when referring to a person with a disability. For example: It is better to say “students with a hearing loss” than “students who are hearing impaired.” The first description implies possession of a disability, the second description equates the students’ identity with the disability.
- “People with hearing impairments” is better than “the hearing impaired” or “the hearing impaired client.”
- Use the term “disability” instead of “handicap”; “people have disabilities, not handicaps. Handicaps are social or environmental obstacles imposed by society on those with disabilities.”
- Do not refer to persons without disabilities as “normal” and persons with disabilities as “abnormal.”
- Avoid terms that project an unnecessary negative connotation.
- Use the most current accepted and specific words to describe disability; do not overuse the term “special” to refer to “special needs” or “special education.”

Snow, K. (2009). *Examples of people first language*. Retrieved from

http://www.inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf

- This PDF document contains a list of “people-first” descriptors of disability.

University of Connecticut. (n.d.). *Examples of UDI in online and blended courses*. Retrieved from <http://udi.uconn.edu/index.php?q=content/examples-udi-online-and-blended-courses>

- Using the principle of equitable use, instructors should provide students with “multiple options to demonstrate mastery of the subject (web design, oral presentations, research papers); using alternate sources to explain complex concepts (easier reading levels).”
- Using the principle of flexibility in use, instructors should use “varied instructional methods (mind/concept maps, group activities, outlines) to provide different ways of learning and experiencing knowledge.”
- Using the principle of simple and intuitive instruction, instructors should provide students with “grading rubrics that clearly lay out expectations for exam performance, papers, or projects; a syllabus with links to reading materials; [and] animated icons to the course website that pop up to remind students of deadlines.”
- Using the principle of perceptible information, instructors should provide students with “reading material and other instructional supports, including websites that are accessible via screen readers, text formatting, zoom text.”
- Using the principle of tolerance for error, instructors should provide students with “logs of threaded discussions for students to reference over the course of the semester,” “the option of turning in multiple drafts of an assignment in order for the student to demonstrate his/her learning progress,” and “practice exercises or tests.”
- Using the principle of low physical effort, instructors should design websites with multiple pages and headings.
- Using the principle of size and spaces for approach and use, instructors should **combine visuals and texts**.
- Using the principle of incorporating a community of learners, instructors should create study groups, discussion groups, project groups, and chat rooms so that students can communicate (and connect) with one another and build relationships.

- Using the principle of instructional climate, instructors should include “a statement in the class syllabus affirming the need for class members to respect diversity in order to establish the expectation of tolerance as well as encourage students to discuss any special learning needs; highlight diverse thinkers who have made significant contributions to the field; provided direct feedback on and share innovative approaches developed by students in the class.”

University of Massachusetts Boston: Equity and Excellence in Higher Education. (n.d.). *Tips to reach all students with a universally designed syllabus*. Retrieved from http://www.universalcoursedesign.org/images/stories/eeonline_docs/ud_syll_tips.pdf

- This table lists both “traditional” and “universal design” strategies for meeting six syllabus tip categories: presenting information in multiple formats, pointing students to resources, providing background information, building in flexibility, presenting information in a digital mode, and including the appropriate amount of information.
- In regards to the traditional “disability” statement, the universal design approach instead includes “a brief statement that acknowledges diverse learning styles [and] provide[s] websites and phone numbers to students’ services on campus as well as a map indicating where these services are [located] physically and virtually to support students’ learning experiences.”