

# Creating Accessible Learning Environments

Alberta Routes

Tip Sheet 19

## Definitions

<b>Accessibility</b>	The opportunity to access programs, services, devices and the environment when needed without barriers.
<b>Accessible Education</b>	The process of designing courses and developing a teaching style to meet the needs of people from a variety of backgrounds, abilities and learning techniques.
<b>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</b>	Guidelines that aid educators in creating learning that is accessible to all and therefore inclusive and transformative for everyone.

## Tips for Creating an Accessible Learning Environment

These tips use the 3 principles of the Universal Design for Learning to create more accessible learning environments.

	<b>Engagement:</b>	<b>Representation:</b>	<b>Action &amp; Expression:</b>
	Develop learning options to produce and sustain interest	Provide content in multiple ways	Offer options that allow learners to fully demonstrate knowledge
<b>Communication with learners</b>	Front-load important communications	Visual presentation of verbal materials (word webs, etc.)	Alternate ways of responding (oral, written)
	Create a visual learning schedule and try to stick to it	Provide communication in multiple ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio/video recordings</li> <li>- Subtitles on PPT</li> <li>- Oral instructions</li> <li>- Alternatives to print</li> </ul>	Regular check-ins
	Design a tutor introduction with an accessibility statement		Open and honest conversations that encourage learners to tell you about any accessibility concerns.
	Give learners more than one way to		Give learners options on how to participate in

	communicate with you		activities and discussions, etc. written comments rather than speaking
	Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase, if necessary.		
<b>Physical spaces</b>	Create room to navigate/move – especially during transitions	Plan for multiple methods of communication and access to information	Separate settings for learners to interact with materials
	Ensure good lighting and acoustics (ex. Lamps and proximity)		Plan for minimizing distance and additional time when a physical movement is required
	Have different work zones, ex. a calm space, a group space, an individual workspace and allow learners to choose their zone		
<b>Materials</b>	Have materials available as soon as possible	Graphic organizers	Oral presentation with visual aids

	Make course materials available in a digital format	High contrast	Alt text
	Use Plain language	Colour coding	Alternative assessments
	Link new ideas to previously learned content	Checklists	Closed captioning
	Create accessible documents and presentations	Accessible technology	
<b>Climate and culture</b>	Additional time	Attentive and responsive to microaggressions	Cooperative learning groups
	Self-selected content opportunities	Avoid assumptions	Use engagement strategies that allow learners to contribute in a variety of ways, ex. Online discussion boards, in-class discussions, and individual assignments.
	Reduced workload	Interactive learning activities	
	Provide breaks	Ensure diversity is reflected in the materials you use	
	Opportunities to collaborate and reflect		

## Related information and resources

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## Next review date

June 2026

## Revision history

June 2024: Created