

Universal Design in Action: Building principles into your Canvas course

9 Principles of Universal Design



Principle 1: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to wide and diverse abilities.

Example in the Classroom

- Ensure course content is accessible to allow equal learning opportunities
- Use assistive technologies and accommodations if necessary

Example in Canvas

- Ensure course is accessible to all
- Design components for low bandwidth usage



Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of preferences and abilities.

Example in the Classroom

- Design activities and assignments that allow choices
- Use a variation of text, multimedia and other visual representation of content

Example in Canvas

- Give students choice for submission format (infographic, text, video, presentation)
- Design variation in submission format for each assignment



Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive

The design is simple and easy to understand regardless of ability.

Example in the Classroom

- Provide clear direction and expectations for assignments and activities

Example in Canvas

- Provide expectations through rubrics
- Provide detailed, clear directions
- Use simple course design
- Declutter front page
- Use a modular format to display and access content



Principle 4: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user regardless of ability.

Example in the Classroom

- Use video or audio recording of live lectures
- Display content in a variety of methods (presentation, audio, video, graphics)
- Share lecture notes with others

Example in Canvas

- Provide access to lecture content ahead of time
- Provide multiple formats of content (visual, audio, video, text, graphics)



Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of unintended consequences.

Example in the Classroom

- Use student response systems, anonymous surveys for feedback
- Provide feedback and allow resubmission with revisions

Example in Canvas

- Use online peer review
- Allow multiple attempts for submissions
- Enable editing of asynchronous content



Principle 6: Low physical effort

The design can be used effectively with minimal effort.

Example in the Classroom

- Simplify assignments and activities
- Break down assignments into multiple steps
- Use decorative content only if it adds value to the content

Example in Canvas

- Organize content in a modular format
- Ensure minimal effort to access content
- Integrate third party tools into the online environment
- Ensure that all tools are compatible with user's hardware



Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

The design has consideration for appropriate size and space

Example in the Classroom

- Arrange teaching space for easy physical access
- Ensure room is comfortable (temperature, line of sight)

Example in Canvas

- Arrange content for simple access
- Break up large content into smaller chunks
- Consider low bandwidth access for digital content



Principle 8: Community of Learners

The design promotes interaction and communication amongst student and instructors

Example in the Classroom

- Integrate social media tools
- Provide opportunities for peer networking

Example in Canvas

- Promote interaction with:
 - Synchronous collaboration tools (Google Tools, Etherpad)
 - Asynchronous discussion
 - Student group areas
 - Virtual classroom
 - Video conferencing



Principle 9: Instructional Climate

Design instruction to be welcoming and inclusive. High expectations are espoused for all students

Example in the Classroom

- Engage with students regularly
- Provide regular and timely feedback
- Maintain the same expectations for all students

Example in Canvas

- Engage with students within the online space
- Set same expectations for all students
- Provide easy access to the instructor
- Ensure a reasonable response time to students inquiries