

Universal Design for Learning as Applied to Library Instruction: Multiple Means of Representation

Guideline 2: Multiple Means of Representation

Everyone perceives and comprehends content in different ways, not just individuals who need accommodations. There are many different ways that students might need to approach content. This guideline encourages instructors to consider multiple ways to present content and provide multiple options for the representation of information.

Here are some ways to incorporate the checkpoints into your library instruction:

Guideline	Checkpoint	Definition	Library-Related Example
Options for Perception	Offer ways of customizing the display of information.	Digital materials provide more flexibility in displaying information that is static in traditional print.	Provide students with a variety of ways to access the content covered in your instruction session . In addition to providing a print copy of a worksheet, provide an editable, digital copy so that students are given the option to adjust things like font size, image size, and colors .
	Offer alternatives for auditory information.	Consider options for presenting information, including that presented aurally.	If you are showing video clips in your instruction session, make sure that the videos have clear captions, or provide a transcript if possible . Additionally, if the classroom technology allows it, use a microphone to amplify your voice .
	Offer alternatives for visual information.	Visual representations are not always equally accessible; provide a non-visual option.	The most simple way to offer alternatives to visual information is to use alt-text on any visual materials (PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.). Using alt-text will also make accessibility software, such as screen readers, work better for those who may need them .
Options for Language and Symbols	Clarify vocabulary and symbols.	Use a combination of words, symbols, numbers, and icons to represent content in many different ways.	If you like to use icons/symbols instead of words or numbers in your instruction presentation or materials, consider adding alternative text descriptions to your materials or provide alternative materials that explain the same things, but in different ways . Or, provide a glossary of terms as an additional material that explains much of the library jargon that student may not be familiar with .
	Clarify syntax and structure.	Provide alternative representations of the content that can help clarify or make more explicit syntax and structure.	Database searching and using other library resources comes naturally to librarians, but not necessarily to students. When demonstrating how to search in a database, try to make connections to concepts students may be more familiar with or have previously learned . When talking about how filters work, consider what other kinds of websites and services use filters that might be more common to the students .



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	Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols.	Make sure that text and symbols don't get in the way of the learning goals.	Students in disciplines such as math, science, and engineering, may discover that scholarly articles contain formulas, equations, and symbols specific to those fields. Be prepared to provide assistive technology (if your library has it) that could help them with text-to-speech to decode these things.
	Promote understanding across languages.	Be prepared to use translations or descriptions of materials for other languages.	If possible, take all the key information from the session and make it available in other languages that are most common at your institution. Or, let the students know if they need a translation to reach out to you and you will do your best to get them one.
	Illustrate through multiple media.	Use simulations, graphics, activities, videos, etc.	Use a combination of text, diagrams, illustrations, videos, images, charts, etc. in your presentation materials to make the information you are presenting more comprehensible to the students who may not learn as well from text alone.
Options for Comprehension	Activate or supply background knowledge.	Build connections to prior understandings and experiences.	It's important to understand what the students may or may not have covered before the library session, but it is also important to understand that things can throw a class off schedule. Reach out to the instructor a few days before the session to confirm that students have chosen research topics in order to make sure that you are designing a lesson that directly connects to their previous classes.
	Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships.	Emphasize the important information and connect it to the learning goals.	Work with the instructor to fully understand the objectives of the course, the research assignment, and previous material covered in class leading up to the library session. Connect the library content to the overarching student learning outcomes of their course to help students realize the importance of library resources.
	Guide information processing and visualization.	Use well-designed materials to help students process the content.	If presenting an activity with several steps, give explicit instructions (verbally and written) and/or diagram the steps visually. For example, if doing an activity where groups each evaluate a different library resource and you have them form new groups with one representative from each resource group, explain explicitly how the groups will be formed and provide a visual model for how this will look.
	Maximize transfer and generalization.	Help students apply what they learned to the bigger picture.	Ask students to take a brief, end-of-session assessment, asking them what their takeaway was from the session, or asking them how they will apply what they learned to their course.

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