Demonstrate Learning Through Choice

UDL CHECKPOINT 4.1: Vary the methods for response and navigation

— Provide learners with alternative options for interacting with the course material (with a focus on both technology and physical interaction) to support optimal means of learner navigation and understanding.

What is it?

Learners bring a range of prior experiences, understandings, opinions, and abilities (technological and otherwise) to each course. While it is important that learners be pushed outside of their comfort zones, instructors must recognize learner diversity and create a class climate in which learners have the opportunity to choose how they demonstrate their learning. This includes allowing multiple different submission methods (when appropriate).

Why do it?

Learners who encounter barriers in their journey can often feel discouraged, which can result in poor quality of work and can even lead to disengagement with the course as well as issues with retaining information. By providing alternative options for interacting with the course material (whether online or in person), learners can more easily remain engaged with the instructions and assessments. Doing so can help learners feel more comfortable with the way they engage with course material.

How can I apply it?

Here are some ways that you can allow learners to choose the way they demonstrate their learning.

- **Provide alternative means for engaging with course material.** By providing verbal (audio), written, and/or video options, all learners can receive and engage with the material in a way that they feel comfortable.
- **Broaden course references.** Be more inclusive with examples and references (especially within a lecture) to allow for a wider scope of learner experiences.
- **Frontload material.** Give learners pertinent information in advance of a class lecture or activity. This helps them to prepare for upcoming lessons and limits learners feeling overwhelmed with material.
- **Encourage multimodal submissions.** Allowing written, audio, visual (images), and video submissions encourages learners to engage with the material and complete their assignments in a way that is intellectually stimulating and comfortable for them.

Summary

Recognizing learners' diversity (intellectually and personally) and creating a class culture that respects this diversity and makes learners feel comfortable can improve their understanding of the material as well as their overall academic journey.