



# UNITED - Inclusion and Diversity of Learners with Diverse Backgrounds

No: 2022-2-DE02-KA210-VET-000092335



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## **UNITED - Inclusion and Diversity of Learners with Diverse Backgrounds**

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Blended Training Program:

“Inclusion and Diversity”

# Enabling Disabled Students to be Fully Included

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The learning content provided here is intended to serve for independent learning and does not pretend to cover all possible aspects and related issues in terms of the subject matter covered. Users are solely responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient and compatible hardware, software, telecommunications equipment, and Internet service necessary for the use of the online campus and modules.

## **About UNITED**

United – Inclusion and Diversity of Learners with Diverse Backgrounds” is an Erasmus+ co-funded project 2022-2-DE02-KA210-VET-000092335 in collaboration with XU Exponential University of Applied Sciences and Luxembourg Creative Lab aims at enhancing the partnering organisations by educating our staff members and peers on the most important European values of Inclusion and Diversity. More information about our project activities you could find at: <https://unitederasmus.com/>

## Unit 1: The various shapes and sizes of disabilities

*Tags: language, barriers, challenges, disabilities, campus*  
*Unit 1 - Introduction*

While we will discuss “disabilities” in general in this unit it is important to note, that there is nothing general about disabilities in the real world. Each individual is different and even those diagnosed with the same medical condition may have differing needs and challenges. Disabilities exist on a spectrum and certain conditions may vary in severity.

No individual should be defined solely by their disability. It is often too easy to dismiss people with limitations as incapable of doing a certain task. However, that kind of thinking perpetuates the stigma associated with these conditions. In this unit we will discuss how do work with such students on campus in a inclusive and respectful manner.

### 1.1. What is disability

A disability refers to a physical, sensory, cognitive, or intellectual impairment that may limit a person's ability to perform certain tasks, participate in activities, or interact with their environment. Disabilities can vary widely in their nature and impact, and they may be present from birth or acquired later in life due to various factors such as illness, injury or aging.

Disabilities can manifest in different forms, including mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments, intellectual or developmental disabilities, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, learning disabilities, and more.

Each disability may have distinct characteristics and challenges associated with it, impacting individuals in unique ways.

It is important to note that disability is not solely defined by an individual's physical or cognitive differences but is also influenced by the social and environmental barriers they may encounter. In this context, the concept of disability is often understood within the framework of the social model of disability, which recognizes that society and its structures can create barriers that hinder the full participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

This perspective emphasizes the need for inclusive practices, accessible environments, and equal opportunities to empower individuals with disabilities and promote their overall well-being and social integration.

It would be very difficult to compile an exhaustive list of all possible disabilities, but Table 1 outlines some of the more common conditions you may encounter amongst students on campus.

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Mobility impairment	Affects the ability to move or use limbs
Visual impairment	Impairment or loss of vision, ranging from partial to total blindness
Hearing impairment	Partial or complete loss of hearing abilities
Intellectual disability	Limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive skills, often present from childhood
Developmental disability	A group of conditions that affect physical, cognitive, and/or behavioral development
Chronic illness	Long-term health conditions that require ongoing management
Mental health conditions	Disorders affecting mental well-being, such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder
Neurological disorders	Disorders affecting the nervous system, such as epilepsy or multiple sclerosis
Autism spectrum disorder	Neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in social interaction and communication skills

Table 1: Common types of disabilities

## 1.2. Using inclusive language for people with disabilities

We discuss inclusive language in greater detail in Module 1, so you could review that information, as it is related to the issues discussed in this unit. In short – using pejorative words and terms that perpetuate stereotypes is greatly detrimental to the inclusion of students with disabilities on campus. To get a better understanding of this, we will review a list of terms that are now considered offensive and propose alternative, inclusive and respectful explanations for certain conditions.

<b>Non-Inclusive Term</b>	<b>Inclusive Alternative</b>
Cripple	Person with a mobility impairment
Blind	Person with visual impairment
Deaf	Person with hearing impairment
Retard(ed)	Person with intellectual disability
Invalid	Person with chronic illness
Crazy/Mad	Person with a mental health condition
Slow/Dim/Retarded	Person with a learning disability

Table 2: Non-inclusive terms and inclusive alternatives for disabilities

It's important to note that as language evolves, what is considered politically correct and inclusive may vary based on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives. For example – the

word “invalid” was not considered offensive initially. It was introduced as a strictly medical term. The connotation that goes along with it has changed over the years and is no longer seen as polite and respectful.

The terms provided in Table 2 are generally accepted as more respectful and person-first language, which emphasizes the person's identity over their disability. However, it's always best to ask individuals about their preferred terminology and language choices, as personal preferences may differ.

**For example:**

*When referring to individuals with a condition known as dwarfism, it is generally more respectful and inclusive to use the terms "little person" or "person with dwarfism." The term "dwarf" is less offensive than the historically pejorative "midget" but is commonly avoided nowadays.*

*However, preferences can vary among individuals. Some people with dwarfism may identify with the term "dwarf" and view it positively as a unique part of their character.*

*"Little person" on the other hand may be seen as belittling to an individual, who would argue that a dwarf is just as "big" of a person.*

*If you are unsure – ask.*

Respectful and inclusive language promotes a more inclusive and respectful society for everyone. The changing dynamics of language can be a challenge for many people. However, this is no excuse for people working in academia, engaging with students with all kinds of conditions. Creating an inclusive environment includes all sorts of things, starting with something as simple as being polite.

### **1.3. The six barriers faced by students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities may encounter various barriers in the university environment. Limited awareness among faculty, staff and students about disability-related issues can result in insufficient support and accommodations. In this unit, based on our previous experience we have outlined 6 common barriers that students with disabilities face. The list may not be exhaustive, but generally includes all major areas requiring attention.

#### **1. Physical barriers**

Inaccessible buildings, classrooms, and facilities can pose challenges for students with mobility impairments. Insufficient ramps, elevators, or accessible parking spaces may limit their ability to navigate the campus independently.

#### **2. Communicative barriers**

Inadequate accommodations for students with hearing or speech impairments can hinder effective communication. Lack of captioning services, sign language interpreters, or accessible communication technologies can isolate these students and impede their participation in lectures, discussions, or group activities.

### **3. Attitudinal barriers**

Negative attitudes, stereotypes, or biases towards disability can create social barriers for students. Prejudice, lack of understanding, or stigma can lead to discriminatory behavior, exclusion, or limited opportunities for engagement and social integration.

### **4. Academic barriers**

Rigidity in teaching methods, assessments, and curriculum design can present challenges for students with diverse learning styles or cognitive disabilities. Lack of alternative formats, such as accessible course materials or flexible assessment options, may impact their ability to fully engage and demonstrate their knowledge.

### **5. Technological barriers**

Inaccessible digital platforms, websites, or learning management systems can create barriers for students with visual impairments or other disabilities. Insufficient assistive technologies or compatibility issues can limit their access to online resources and educational materials.

### **6. Financial Barriers**

Additional costs associated with accommodations, specialized equipment, or support services may pose financial challenges for students with disabilities. Limited financial resources may impact their ability to fully participate in academic and extracurricular activities.

Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including proactive accessibility planning, awareness campaigns, policy implementation, faculty training, and the provision of appropriate accommodations and support services.

By fostering an inclusive and accessible university environment, students with disabilities can have equal opportunities to thrive academically, engage socially and reach their full potential. We will discuss some mitigation strategies to overcome these barriers in Unit 3 of this Module.

## **Overcoming the six barriers**



## Key Takeaways

- Disabilities can vary widely in their nature and impact, and they may be present from birth or acquired later in life due to various factors such as illness, injury or aging.
- As language evolves what is considered politically correct and inclusive may vary based on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives.
- Overcoming the barriers students with disabilities face requires a multifaceted approach, including proactive accessibility planning, awareness campaigns, policy implementation, faculty training, and the provision of appropriate accommodations and support services.

## Recommendations for Further Reading.

In this module we made several references to the concept of inclusive language. To learn more about this, review the contents of Module 1: Basics of Inclusive language.

## References for Unit 1:

**Grant, B.** (2023). Professional Guide for Working With Students With Disabilities. Bestcolleges.com

**Resnich, A.** (2022) Types of Ableist language and what to say instead. Verywell Mind

## Unit 2: How universities can do better

*Tags: UDL, campus culture, learning, safe environment,  
Unit 2 - Introduction*

Modern universities are multicultural spaces where people from various backgrounds meet to exchange ideas and knowledge. Having all this facilitates the creation of an inclusive environment where people with various backgrounds can feel safe and accepted. Unfortunately, one particular minority has fared worse than the rest and has not been included in the campus experience to the fullest extent – people with various impairments.

While advances have been made to accommodate various gender identities, races and ethnicities, many campuses are still not designed with disabled people in mind. Classes often include materials that are difficult for them to access and exams follow a strict pattern, that doesn't take their capabilities into account.

We will discuss some of the ways to counteract this in the following Unit.

### 2.1. Making the campus more inclusive

By implementing specific measures, universities can create an inclusive and accessible campus environment that supports the diverse needs of students with disabilities and ensures equal access to education, resources and opportunities for all. The initial investment on such improvements is not insurmountable for most institutions and there are options to apply for EU funding to realize them.

We will outline some key feature.

- **Physical Accessibility**

Universities must ensure that buildings, classrooms, libraries, and other facilities are wheelchair accessible with ramps, elevators, and accessible entrances. As part of these efforts handrails, grab bars, and tactile paving can be installed to assist individuals with mobility impairments.

Another often overlooked matter is installing accessible parking spaces located close to the entrances. These parking space must be marked with a sign and painted in blue to visibly distinguish them from the rest. Campus security must ensure that these spaces are not being used by people without disabilities.



*Image 1 – Examples of physical accessibility features in campus. Source: BraunAbility*

Finally - all pathways and sidewalks within the campus must be well-maintained and kept free from obstacles. Notice how in Img. 1 the selected parking spaces for people with disabilities are located right next to the pathway.

**- Inclusive infrastructure:**

Creating universally designed restrooms and washrooms that accommodate various accessibility needs, such as spacious stalls, grab bars and accessible sinks. Something as simple as going to the bathroom can be challenging for people with decreased mobility.



*Image 2 – Example of an accessible toilet. Source – Wikipedia*

Automatic doors and motion sensor lights in common areas can be used to facilitate easy access and navigation. Furniture in the rooms must also be considered - including desks, chairs, and study areas, is adjustable and can accommodate individuals with different physical needs.

#### **- Providing technologies and resources**

Assistive technologies such as screen readers, speech-to-text software and alternative input devices in computer labs and libraries can be very beneficial for students with disabilities. Universities must ensure that digital resources, including websites, online learning platforms, and course materials, are accessible and compatible with assistive technologies.

Institutions should also look for ways to offer additional formats for textbooks and reading materials, such as large print, braille or audio versions.



*Image 3 - A Brail book. Source: American Foundation for the Blind*

#### **- Communication and information access**

Faculty and staff at universities should be prepared to implement inclusive communication practices, including providing captioning or sign language interpretation for lectures, events, and videos. Important announcements, campus-wide communications and emergency alerts are to be made available in accessible formats, such as email, text, or captioned videos.

Last, but not least in terms of importance, universities must work to promote disability awareness and inclusion through awareness campaigns, workshops, and events. They must inclusive language and respectful attitudes towards individuals with disabilities and foster a

campus culture that values diversity and actively includes students with disabilities in all aspects of university life, including clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities.

## **2.2. Making the classes more inclusive**

The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are based on the idea that learners have different strengths, needs, and preferences. UDL aims to provide multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to address these diverse learning needs. The three fundamental principles of UDL are the following:

### **- Multiple means of representation**

This principle focuses on providing learners with various ways to perceive and comprehend information. It involves presenting information in different formats, such as text, visuals, audio, or multimedia, to cater to different learning styles and preferences.

By offering multiple representations, learners can access information in ways that best suit their individual needs, enhancing their understanding and engagement with the content.

### **- Multiple means of engagement**

This principle emphasizes offering learners different ways to engage and motivate themselves in the learning process. It involves providing varied and meaningful opportunities for learners to connect with the content, set goals and maintain their interest and motivation.

Engaging strategies can include interactive activities, real-world applications, collaborative projects, or choices in assignments, allowing learners to find relevance and personal connections to the material.

### **- Multiple means of expression**

This principle focuses on providing learners with diverse ways to demonstrate their understanding and express their knowledge. It involves offering different options for learners to express themselves, such as through writing, speaking, visuals, multimedia, or hands-on activities.

By providing flexible means of expression, learners can showcase their comprehension and skills in ways that align with their strengths and preferences, promoting their confidence and ownership of the learning process.

These three principles of UDL work together to create a flexible and inclusive learning environment where learners have multiple pathways to access, engage with, and demonstrate their understanding of the content. By considering the variability of learners and providing

options for representation, engagement, and expression, UDL aims to remove barriers and promote equal opportunities for all students to succeed in their learning journey.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Universities can create an inclusive and accessible campus environment that supports the diverse needs of students with disabilities and ensures equal access to education, resources and opportunities for all.
- By considering the variability of learners and providing options for representation, engagement, and expression, the UDL method can remove barriers and promote equal opportunities for all students to succeed in their learning journey.

### **Recommendations for Further Reading**

The principles discussed here can also be used to reduce exam anxiety. To find out more about this topic - review Module 3.

### **References for Unit 2:**

**CAST** (2018) Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Available at: <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

**Puri, N.** (2022) Disability-Friendly Universities in the World. [leverageedu.com](https://www.leverageedu.com)

**UN Report** (2023) Disability and Higher Education: Better Architectural Choices for Inclusive Campuses

## Unit 3: Creating a culture of acceptance

*Tags: university, students, inclusion, misconceptions, fears*  
*Unit 1 - Introduction*

Even if all possible improvements are made to the campus the environment will not be inclusive for students if the culture on campus does not change. And culture is a difficult thing to address. Even some well-meaning faculty members and students alike can perpetuate stereotypes and believe in myths about people with disabilities.

Few people on campus, if any at all, would want to be offensive towards disabled people on purpose. In this unit we will discuss options on how to deal with unwanted biases.

### 3.1. Common misconceptions and stereotypes about disabilities

Misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding disabilities often perpetuate false beliefs and contribute to the marginalization of individuals with disabilities.

By challenging these misconceptions and stereotypes, we can foster a more inclusive and accepting society that values the diverse abilities and contributions of all individuals, regardless of disability. Embracing diversity and promoting equal opportunities for disabled individuals benefits everyone and creates a more compassionate and inclusive world.

We have prepared a list of some of the common misconceptions, along with a brief explanation to debunk them:

- **Misconception 1:** Disabilities implies inability.
- **Reality**

Disabilities do not define a person's abilities or intelligence. People with disabilities have a wide range of skills, talents, and capabilities, just like anyone else. It's important to recognize and appreciate the unique strengths individuals with disabilities bring to various aspects of life.

- **Misconception 2:** Disabled individuals are always dependent on others.
- **Reality:**

Independence varies for everyone, regardless of ability. Many disabled individuals lead independent lives, actively contributing to their communities, pursuing careers, and engaging in daily activities with the help of assistive devices, accommodations and supportive



environments. Students in universities are often no different, dealing with their courseworks and assignments on their own.

- **Misconception 3:** Disabled individuals are inspirational or heroic for merely living with a disability.
- **Reality:**

While disabled individuals may face additional challenges, it is important to recognize their accomplishments and contributions based on their skills, talents, and personal achievements, rather than solely focusing on their disability.

People with disabilities deserve to be valued for their individuality and diverse accomplishments, just like anyone else. If you focus too much attention on a person's medical condition, you may make them feel uncomfortable. Instead – try showing that you value them for their achievements, personality and skills.

- **Misconception 4:** All disabilities are visible or apparent.
- **Reality:**

Disabilities come in various forms and not all are immediately obvious to observers. Many disabilities, such as chronic pain, mental health conditions or certain learning disabilities are completely invisible.

It's therefore crucial to avoid making assumptions or judgments based on appearances and instead approach each person with respect and understanding. You may have been working with someone who has a disability for a long time and never noticed.

**Misconception 5:** Disabled individuals need constant assistance

- **Reality:**

Disabled individuals often desire understanding, acceptance, and equal opportunities rather than pity. Treating them with dignity and respect and providing necessary accommodations and support can empower them to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to society on an equal footing.

### 3.2. Dealing with unconscious biases

Virtually all of us have implicit biases, which guide our perceptions, actions and decisions. The most difficult part of dealing with these is to acknowledge that they exist. Even well-meaning



people who have intent on causing harm to their peers with impairments will still exhibit some biases.

Here is the most basic example: When you think of an individual with a disability, do you focus on the things the individual can do or cannot do? Where do you get the information on which you base your views? Do you ask or observe the individual with a disability?

Most people will consider the things that individual **cannot do** first, without ever having asked or observed if they can actually perform that activity. They simply assume, based on their prior experience and knowledge. This is a natural mechanism our mind has developed to manage the vast quantities of information we encounter.

There are several techniques we can use to monitor ourselves and avoid falling into such thought patterns. Here are some of them:

- **Counter-stereotypes**

Develop new associations that counter your stereotypes. Expose yourself to or think about people who possess positive traits that contrast with prevalent stereotypes. For example, there are many successful people with impairments, who have nonetheless succeeded in art, business, politics and in academia as well.

- **Individuation**

Consider the attributes of the individual apart from their group. For instance, when you meet someone who has a mental health condition, focus on individual characteristics, traits, interests, and preferences rather than stereotypes about persons with these conditions. You will inevitably discover that individuals are much more complex than any stereotypes could possibly describe.

- **Perspective taking**

Take the perspective of the individual. Try to understand from their perspective what they encounter and what adaptive techniques they might use to function successfully. Perspective taking is an important technique not only in interpersonal relations, but also in business, pedagogy and management.

- **Deliberative self-reflection**

Reflect on your perceptions, judgments, behavior, decisions and actions. We tend to act on our stereotypes when we have a lot of information to process in a short amount of time and feel stressed. Take time to evaluate what you have thought about in the past. Some of your decisions about people may have been influenced by such misconceptions and stereotypes.

Only once you have mastered the skill of monitoring yourself and improving your own attitudes, whether conscious or subconscious, you can help others to do so. You will learn more on how to do that in Module 8, where we focus on conflict resolution.

### 3.3. Overcoming the six barriers

In unit 1 we identified 6 key categories of barriers that students with disabilities will face. In this unit we will elaborate further on the matter and propose some basic mitigation strategies. While each case must be viewed individually, these are general guideline that are applicable in most circumstances.

Barrier	Mitigation Strategies
<b>Physical barriers</b>	- Ensure that all buildings, classrooms, and facilities are accessible by installing ramps, elevators or accessible parking spaces.
<b>Communication barriers</b>	- Provide captioning services for lectures and discussions. - Use accessible communication technologies such as text messaging or video conferencing.
<b>Attitudinal barriers</b>	- Promote positive attitudes towards disability by raising awareness and providing education on disability issues. - Encourage students to interact with each other and participate in group activities.
<b>Academic barriers</b>	- Use a combination of universal design and differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles or cognitive disabilities. - Provide alternative formats such as accessible course materials or flexible assessment options.
<b>Technological barriers</b>	- Ensure that all digital platforms, websites, or learning management systems are accessible by using assistive technologies or compatibility tools.
<b>Financial barriers</b>	- Consider financial assistance such as scholarships or grants for students with disabilities. - Offer support services such as tutoring or counseling to help students overcome financial challenges.

*Table 3: Mitigation strategies for overcoming barriers to inclusion*

While some of these strategies may seem straightforward and even obvious in hindsight, it is noteworthy that many universities and public institutions have yet to adapt their premises with even the most basic accessibility features such as ramps.

### Key Takeaways

- By challenging these misconceptions and stereotypes, we can foster a more inclusive and accepting society that values the diverse abilities and contributions of all individuals, regardless of disability.
- Virtually all of us have implicit biases, which guide our perceptions, actions and decisions. The most difficult part of dealing with these is to acknowledge that they exist.

### Recommendations for Further Reading

Conflict resolution and addressing exclusionary behavior are skills that build upon your knowledge of stereotypes and misconceptions. Explore Module 8 for more information on these topics.

### References for Unit 3:

**American Bar Association (2023)** Implicit Biases & People with Disabilities, ABA Commission on Disability Rights

**Australian Public Service Commission (2021)** Disability myths and stereotypes

## Case Study

Let's compare a lesson that follows the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) with a regular lesson. We'll focus on a fictional class where the topic is digital business. For this example we also assume that we have some students with visual and hearing impairments.

### **Regular Lesson:**

In a regular lesson on digital business, the faculty delivers a lecture using a PowerPoint presentation with text-heavy slides and visuals. The lecturer explains the process, provides examples, and assigns a worksheet for students to complete individually. A class discussion follows and students take a written quiz to assess their understanding.

### **UDL-Modeled Lesson for Students with Disabilities:**

In a UDL-modeled lesson, specific considerations are made to address the needs of students with disabilities. Here's an example:

#### **- Multiple Means of Representation:**

**Visual Impairments:** For students with visual impairments, the teacher provides alternative formats of information. They offer braille materials, tactile diagrams, or 3D models that represent the components of photosynthesis. Descriptive audio descriptions accompany visual presentations, allowing students to understand the visuals through verbal explanations.

**Hearing Impairments:** To support students with hearing impairments, the teacher incorporates closed captions or transcripts for any videos or audio materials used in the lesson. They also provide visual cues and gestures while explaining key concepts to ensure understanding through visual means.

#### **- Multiple means of engagement:**

**Visual Impairments:** Engaging discussions are facilitated where students with visual impairments can actively participate. The teacher encourages verbal responses, provides ample time for explanations, and allows for alternative modes of expression such as verbal storytelling or creative verbal descriptions of the photosynthesis process.

**Hearing Impairments:** Students with hearing impairments are provided with sign language interpreters or real-time captioning services to ensure full participation in class discussions. Visual aids, such as diagrams, graphics, and written instructions, are used to enhance engagement and comprehension.

- **Multiple means of expression:**

Visual Impairments: Students with visual impairments are offered various options to express their understanding, such as creating tactile models, using assistive technology for written responses, or verbally presenting their knowledge to the class.

Hearing Impairments: Students with hearing impairments can express their understanding through written assignments, visual presentations, or sign language presentations.

**Why regular lessons may not be sufficient for people with visual or hearing impairments.**

Visual Impairments: Regular lessons heavily rely on visual content, such as text-heavy slides or visual diagrams, which can present challenges for students with visual impairments who may not have equal access to the information being presented.

Hearing Impairments: Regular lessons that solely rely on spoken instructions or audio materials may exclude students with hearing impairments who require visual supports or captions to fully comprehend the content being discussed.

By incorporating UDL principles and tailoring the lesson to meet the needs of students with disabilities, barriers related to visual and hearing impairments can be addressed, ensuring equal access to information and promoting their active participation and understanding of the topic.

## Tips & Recommendations

- Disabilities can encompass a wide range of characteristics and consequences, and they can either be present from birth or acquired later in life due to various factors such as illness, injury, or aging.
- As language evolves, what is considered politically correct and inclusive may vary depending on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives.
- To overcome the challenges faced by students with disabilities, a comprehensive approach is necessary, which includes proactive accessibility planning, awareness campaigns, policy implementation, faculty training, and the provision of suitable accommodations and support services.
- Universities as well as the VET centers have the ability to establish an inclusive and accessible campus environment that caters to the diverse needs of students with disabilities, ensuring equal access to education, resources, and opportunities for everyone.
- By recognizing the diverse nature of learners and offering various options for representation, engagement, and expression, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach can eliminate barriers and promote equal opportunities for all students to thrive in their educational journey.
- By questioning and dispelling these misconceptions and stereotypes, we can cultivate a more inclusive and accepting society that recognizes and values the diverse abilities and contributions of individuals, regardless of disability.
- Implicit biases exist within almost all of us, influencing our perceptions, actions, and decisions. The most challenging aspect of addressing these biases is acknowledging their existence.

## Glossary

**Ableist Language** - Language that reinforces discrimination against individuals with disabilities by using derogatory or demeaning terms, perpetuating stereotypes, or suggesting inferiority based on disability.

**Accessible communication technologies** - Technologies designed to enable individuals with disabilities to access and communicate information effectively. These technologies may include text-to-speech software, screen readers, captioning, alternative input devices, and other assistive technologies.

**Disability** - A broad term that refers to a physical, cognitive, sensory, or developmental condition that may affect a person's ability to engage in daily activities, interact with their environment, or participate fully in society.

**Equal Opportunities** - The principle of providing fair and unbiased opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background, characteristics, or abilities. It entails removing barriers and providing accommodations to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

**Implicit Bias** - Unconscious attitudes, beliefs, or stereotypes that influence a person's perception, actions, or decisions, often without their conscious awareness. These biases can be favorable or unfavorable and may impact interactions and decisions in a discriminatory manner.

**Impairment** - A specific limitation or loss of a person's physical, mental, sensory, or cognitive functions. It may refer to a specific body part, organ, or system and can vary in severity and impact on daily functioning.

**Stereotype** - A fixed and oversimplified generalization or belief about a particular group of people. Stereotypes can be based on various characteristics, such as race, gender, or disability, and often lead to unfair assumptions or judgments.

**Universal Design Learning (UDL)** - An educational framework that aims to provide flexible learning environments and instructional materials that accommodate diverse learners. UDL emphasizes multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to promote equitable and inclusive learning experiences.

## References

**American Bar Association (2023)** Implicit Biases & People with Disabilities, ABA Commission on Disability Rights

**Australian Public Service Commission (2021)** Disability myths and stereotypes

**CAST** (2018) Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Available at: <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

**Grant, B.** (2023). Professional Guide for Working With Students With Disabilities. Bestcolleges.com

**Puri, N.** (2022) Disability-Friendly Universities in the World. leverageedu.com

**Resnich, A.** (2022) Types of Ableist language and what to say instead. Verywell Mind

**UN Report** (2023) Disability and Higher Education: Better Architectural Choices for Inclusive Campuses



## Check Your Knowledge (Multiple Choice with one correct answer)

**1. What does the so-called “social model of disability” discuss?**

- a) It focuses on removing barriers created by society.
- b) It focuses on fixing or curing the individual’s disability.
- c) The social model ignores the individual’s differences.
- d) None of the above.

**2. Which are the 6 barriers faced by students with disabilities?**

- a) financial, physical, communicative, attitudinal, academic and technological
- b) hearing, visual, cognitive, psychological, medical and auditory
- c) digital, anatomical, traditional, new, moderate, severe
- d) Students with disabilities are well integrated in modern universities and face no barriers.

**3. How can the campus be improved to make it more accommodating for people with disabilities?**

- a) By providing separate buildings for mobility-impaired people.
- b) By organizing separate classes for people with disabilities
- c) By hiring people who can constantly assist people with disabilities
- d) By improving the physical environment - (i.e. - parking spaces, entry ramps, accessible bathrooms etc.)

**4. Which of the following is NOT part of the principles of Universal Design Learning (UDL)?**

- a) Multiple means of representation
- b) Multiple means of mobility
- c) Multiple means of engagement
- d) Multiple means of expression

**5. What are some common misconceptions about people with disabilities?**

- a) Their disability affects their thinking, even if it is strictly physical.
- b) Their disabilities can be contagious and people should stay away from them.
- c) Disabled individuals are always dependent on others.
- d) All of the above

**6. Who is likely to have unconscious biases?**

- a) All people have some level of unconscious bias
- b) Racist and sexist people
- c) People that represent historically dominant groups
- d) People with disabilities

**7. The process of “individuation” includes:**

- a) Singling out an individual that is responsible for the problems of disabled people.
- b) Considering the attributes of the individual regardless of their group identity.
- c) Helping out one particular person in need.
- d) Talking to a disabled person during a group meeting.

**8. Why is it important to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes about disabled people?**

- a) It is not important. Instead it is widely seen as a form of virtue-signaling.
- b) We can discover something that is ultimately true about the stereotypes
- c) We can improve our future career prospects.
- d) We can help foster a more inclusive and accepting society.

**9. Which of the following are important to ensure physical accessibility of campuses?**

- a) Ramps and elevators
- b) Accessible entrances
- c) Tactile paving
- d) All of the above

**10. The word “invalid”:**

- a) was a common medical term in the past, but is now seen as inappropriate.
- b) is meant to refer only to people with impaired mobility.
- c) was an insult, that took on a more medical meaning over time.
- d) is the appropriate term to use, when referring to a person with a disability.