BUILDING ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

for *all* students with Universal Design for Learning

More than 2,000 respondents to the 2019 EDUCAUSE student survey identified themselves as having a physical and/or a learning disability that required accessible technology or accommodations for their coursework. Only half of these respondents rated the support their institutions provided for their technology needs positively. Additionally, many students choose not to disclose their disabilities to institutions. We asked students how their instructors could use technology to help their learning; their responses illustrate how the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can help meet the needs of all students.

What Is Universal Design for Learning?

UDL is a framework for designing for learning variability from the ground up by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression.[1] A UDL approach offers students learning options that work best for them and decreases the need for individualized accommodations.

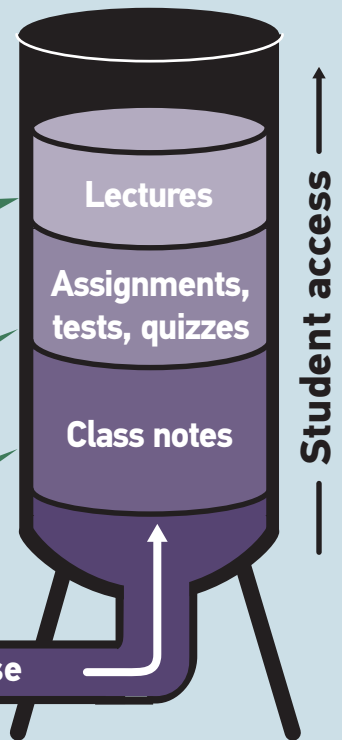## How can faculty use tech tools to increase accessibility?

Many of the technologies students with disabilities said they needed are already available. Providing materials in more formats and using the LMS to share them can increase access to learning resources for *all* students.

> **Provide recordings of classes** through an online portal to disabled students with attendance, sensory disability, and/or comprehension issues related to their disabilities.

> Turning in **homework online** would be ideal considering walking is exhausting [and] my physical disabilities keep me home a lot.

> Ensure **digital copies** of slides are always available before class, to allow for reading during class (eyesight disability).

> Use **Blackboard** more often. Some professors love it, but a lot refuse to use it.

Lectures

Assignments, tests, quizzes

Class notes

LMS use

Student access

How can instructors use technology to implement UDL?

Technology is a crucial tool for students with disabilities. Integrating technology as part of an inclusive teaching strategy can give *all* students more opportunities to learn and succeed, regardless of the adaptations they use.

Teaching with technology

Universal Design for Learning

Mobile devices in class

Training for faculty and students

Multiple methods to present material

Engagement through use of technology

> Stop telling me about studies that say using technology in classrooms is a distraction. **Adaptive technology seems to be overlooked** often in this constant speech.

> I have a reading disability. [...] I would love it if more assignments involved **watching videos or documentaries**.

> Have at least one day dedicated to **teaching us how to use specific programs** and tools.

> Professors should use Poll Everywhere, or Kahoot, in class to see if students actually **pay attention and remember** the lecture.

Academic success

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[1] CAST, "The UDL Guidelines," http://udlguidelines.cast.org/