

# Design assessments to enable students to demonstrate their understanding

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Design considerations in primary settings' from the Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Design assessments with UDL
- Minimise threats and barriers
- Consider potential barriers
- Options for expressing learning
- Reflection questions
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design considerations in primary settings](#)

Suggestion: [Design assessments to enable students to demonstrate their understanding](#)

Date

19 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-assessments-to-enable-students-to-demonstrate-their-understanding-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-assessments-to-enable-students-to-demonstrate-their-understanding-2)

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## Design assessments with UDL

Plan for learner variability at the outset.

The important thing about getting an accurate assessment is to universally design it and make sure that we're actually measuring what we're hoping to measure,

so to do that we have to use alternatives, multiple assignments, multiple forms of a test so that every student gets a fair and accurate assessment.

Source:

[David Rose](#)

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/udl/cresource/q2/p07/>

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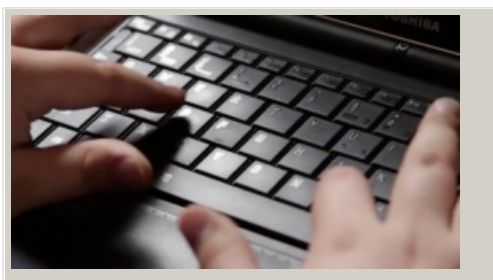
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## Minimise threats and barriers

Tyler describes his relief at being able to express his understanding.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/64541738>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Enabling e-Learning \(NZ\)](#)

<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Curriculum-areas/English/1-1-Netbooks-Allowing-excellence-in-the-classroom>

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## Consider potential barriers

Reflect on how you could minimise or remove the following potential barriers:

- ✓ text-heavy assessments
- ✓ multiple choice assessments (paper-based or online)
- ✓ online assessments
- ✓ time restrictions
- ✓ prescribed writing tools (handwriting or typing)
- ✓ unfamiliar layout
- ✓ length of assessment
- ✓ size and organisation of spaces and boxes to record in
- ✓ printed assessment.

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## Options for expressing learning

Offer a range of flexible options for students to show what they know through:

- ✓ student portfolios
- ✓ systems where students are involved in keeping track of their own learning
- ✓ self assessments
- ✓ peer assessments
- ✓ surveys
- ✓ checklists and regular check in times
- ✓ journals and learning stories
- ✓ video or audio recordings.

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## Reflection questions

Consider the following questions in your own context.

How do I evaluate the knowledge and skills that are directly related to learning goals and expectations?

What processes do I use to ensure assessments are accessible, flexible, ongoing, and used to inform teaching and learning?

How do I provide multiple means for students to express their thinking?

Do I co-construct assessments with students whenever possible?

Do I ensure students are supported with the tools and approaches they need to be successful (text-to-speech, Reader and/or Writer, digital version, additional time)?

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## Useful resources



### Top 10 UDL tips for assessment

A assessment resource published by CAST, the Center of Assistive Technologies. It provides suggestions and questions on how can you use the UDL framework to design and reflect on assessments. This resource can be downloaded as a PDF.

[Visit website](#)



### Know students better: 15 tools for formative assessments

Read time: 21 min

A selection of digital formative assessment tools that can be used for free. Tony Gear has written about 15. Most of these tools work with any web browser, so they can be used on laptops, iPads, Chromebooks, tablets, and smartphones.

Publisher: Learning in Hand

[Visit website](#)

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