

Design options for expression and communication

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Design multiple means of Action and Expression' from the Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Includes:

Why this matters

Use multiple media for communication

Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity

Build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance

Address biases related to modes of expression and communication

Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Why this matters

Design learning environments that value multiple and novel modes of communication.

This will reduce barriers and enable every learner to share their knowledge, understanding and ideas ([CAST, 2024](#)).

[Design options for expression and communication](#) prompts us to consider learner variability at the outset and offer options to:

- [use multiple media for communication](#)
- [use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity](#)
- [build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance](#)
- [address biases related to modes of expression and communication](#).

This guideline also reminds us to consider:

- How will these options support learners in reaching their goals?
- Could any of these options create barriers or unnecessary challenges?
- Will all learners have fair and equal access to high-quality choices?
- How do these options reflect and respond to learner variability?

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Use multiple media for communication

Encourage learners to express what they know using different media, such as audio or graphics, unless a specific format is essential to the goal ([CAST, 2024](#)).

Encouraging learners to express understanding using multiple media:

- reduces media-specific barriers to communication and expression experienced by disabled learners
- demonstrates respect for forms of communication that have historically been devalued, such as oral storytelling or movement
- increases opportunities for learners to demonstrate their strengths, prior knowledge, skills and expertise and in different media
- increases opportunities for every learner to develop a wider range of expression and skills in a media-rich world.

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity

Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity

Action & Expression

- Use spell checkers, word-prediction, speech-to text software or other audio and video recording options.
- Use graphing calculators, geometric sketch pads or pre-formatted paper.
- Use sentence starters, story webs, mindmaps, concept mapping tools.
- Use Computer-Aided-Design (CAD), music notation software, or mathematical notation software.
- Use web applications (e.g., collaborative applications, animation, presentation, generative AI for research, editing, idea generation).

Adapted with permission: UDL Guidelines 3.0, CAST (2024)

Source:

UDL Guidelines 3.0, CAST (2024)

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression/expression-communication/construction-composition-creativity/>

[View full image \(34 KB\)](#)

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance

These scaffolds can be gradually reduced as learners gain confidence and independence ([CAST, 2024](#)).

Build learner fluency (ease of showing what I know and can do) by using a range of formative assessments and supportive scaffolds.

Consider how you can utilise a range of supports, such as:

- provide different ways to reach the same goal using varied strategies, skills, or approaches
- provide access to a range of supporters (a buddy in the same class, an older learner, another adult) who can offer support, motivation, and feedback
- offer scaffolds that support learners at different levels and can be gradually removed as independence grows (for example, built-in supports in digital tools)
- provide access to [formative assessment opportunities](#) so learners can check their own progress
- give feedback that is flexible and can be tailored to meet individual learning needs.

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Address biases related to modes of expression and communication

Consider how different ways of communicating are valued.

Valuing multiple forms of expression and communication creates opportunities for all learners to contribute and participate in learning, [CAST \(2024\)](#):

- Reflect on the modes of expression and communication (print, digital text, image, movement, AAC, NZSL, closed captions, audio) that are offered to learners.
- Reflect on how storytelling and non-text-based forms of expression and communication are valued.
- Discuss with learners how different modes of expression that align with the goal are equally valued.

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Action and Expression](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for expression and communication](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-expression-and-communication

Useful resources



Design options for expression and communication (UDL Guideline)

This UDL guideline helps educators design learning environments that value multiple and novel modes of expression and communication.

This guideline supports the UDL Action and Expression principle.

Publisher: CAST (2024)

[Visit website](#)

This information was downloaded/printed from the Ministry of Education's website "Inclusive Education". Except where otherwise noted it is Crown Copyright 2018.

Information on the Inclusive Education website is regularly updated so we recommend you check the website version of this information to ensure it remains current.