# Universal Access (UA)

*What is UA and what could this look like at SU?*

Dr Marcia Lyner-Cleophas - TLN - 27 March 2025

# Discussion

--------*Universal Design thinking*--------

Qu 1. What is Universal Design?

Qu 2. What is Universal Design for Learning?

Qu 3. What is Universal Access?

Mentimeter code: **5496 9861**

- https://www.menti.com/aln2usrodhfa

# UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006:1)

Preamble:

a) Recalling the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations which recognize the <u>inherent dignity and worth and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world</u>

# UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006:1)

Preamble:

c) Reaffirming the <u>universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination</u>

# 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals

- 1. No poverty
- 3. Good health and wellbeing
- 4. Quality education
- 5. Gender equality
- 8. Decent work and economic growth
- 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- 10. Reduced inequalities
- 11. Sustainable cities and communities
- 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
- 17. Partnerships for goals

# Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in the South African Public Universities (TOC) (HSRC, 2023)

*Framework for operationalizing transformation indicators:*

- Governance, leadership and management (principles commitment)

- Higher education experiences (equitable access, representative staff and students, universal access and support for student/staff groups
  Decolonisation & transformation of institutional cultures)

- Teaching and learning

- Research and knowledge production

- Community engagements and societal relevance

- About students with disabilities:

    'The discourse around supporting students with disabilities has become extended to

     include a wider range of students with special needs. At the same time, the requirement

    to provide facilities, services and support for these students has come to be embedded in

    a principled framework of "universal access" as a social justice imperative,  which is

    gradually displacing  earlier "remedial services" notions'

# TOC (HSRC, 2023)

*Makes four recommendations at the end – one is:*

*-System-wide need for coordinated efforts to support mainstreaming transformation and resourcing transformation-related programmes and initiatives.*

*-Basic guidelines for the establishment of an adequate institutional policy architecture,*

*-and programmes and  best practice interventions promoting*

*transformation should be drafted*

*-with the support of system-level bodies, and these efforts should be supported with adequate funding*

Ronald Mace:
American architect, product designer, educator
-coined term "Universal Design" -'70s

***Prior to Mace*:**

**Marc Harrison (1928 – 1996)**
- **Prof of Industrial Engineering at Rhode Island School of Design;**
- **Had TBI as a child;**
- **Later challenged design for the average person**
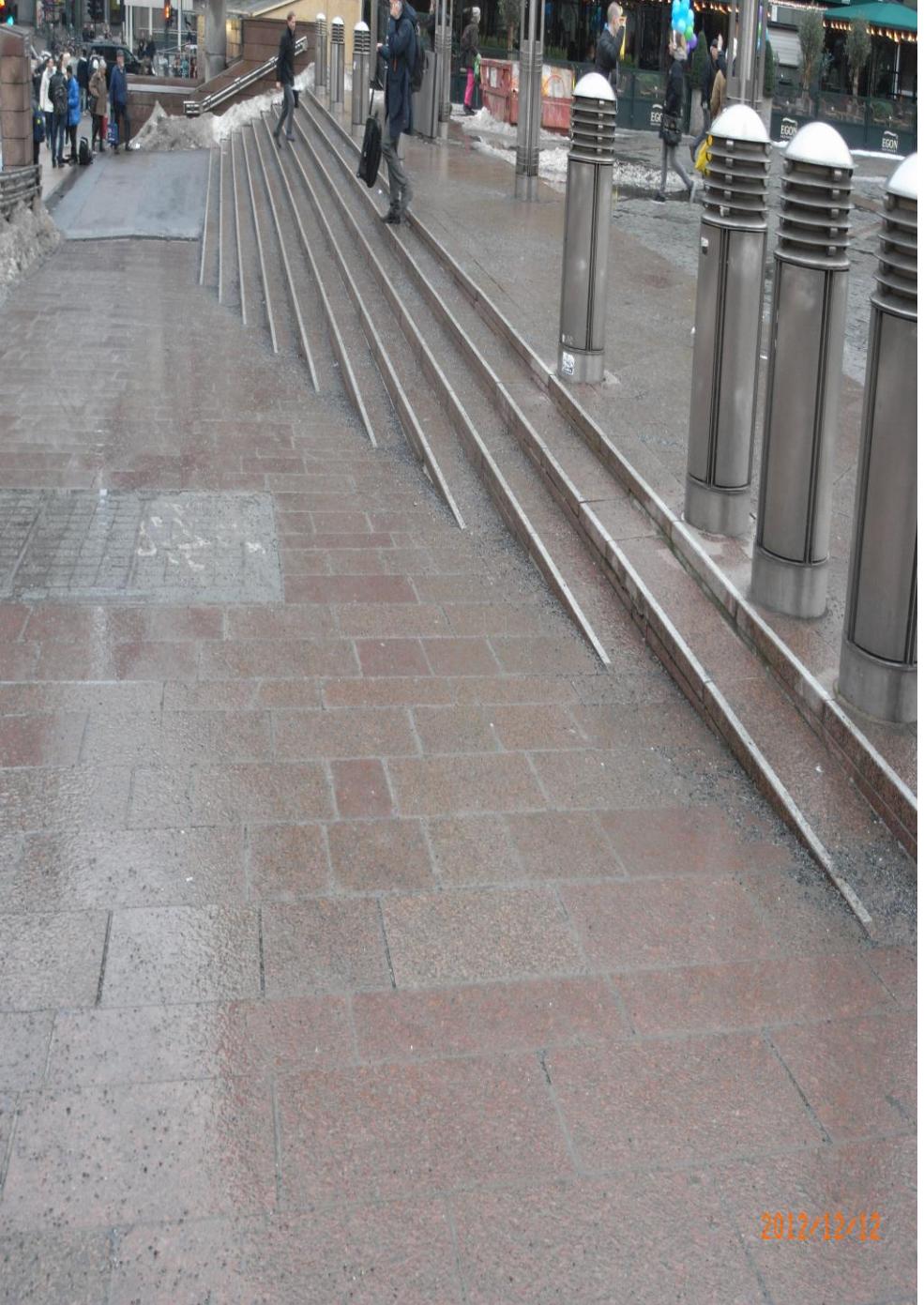
**Center for Universal Design (CUD) – North Carolina State University**

*Promoted product & environment design
to be used by all people
for a more accessible and usable world.

# Universal Design

The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

"Universal Design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

(Article 2, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006)

# Universal Access

Refers to the removal of cultural, physical, social and other barriers

that prevent people (including people with disabilities)
from entering, using or benefitting from the various systems in a society

that are available to other citizens and residents
*(Stellenbosch University Disability Access Policy, 2018).*

Universal access in practice

Leave no One out

❑ **Think about how your movement is impacted:**

- two hands with luggage/carrying a load

- people with mobility difficulties

- on crutches/injuries

- post operation

- pushing a shopping trolley or pram

Let us look at the journey of a student

# From application to university

# to

# graduation

# Progressive realization



- The concept of progressive realisation emphasises that the full realisation of all economic, social and cultural rights will generally not be able to be achieved in a short period of time.

- **Progressive:** happening or developing gradually or in stages

- **Realisation:** achievement of something desired or anticipated

- Refers to gradually developing within your workspace towards being universally accessible (something desired or anticipated)

# Reasonable accommodation

The necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms

(Article 2, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007)

# Universal Design

# 7 Principles of UD

1. Equitable use

2. Flexibility in use

3. Simple and intuitive use

4. Perceptible information

5. Tolerance for error

6. Low physical effort

7. Size and space for approach

**Equitable Use**

- Useful and marketable to people of all abilities.

- Example: Automatic doors

**Flexibility in Use**

- Accommodates a wide range of preferences & abilities.

- Example: Adjustable chair

**Simple and Intuitive Use**

- Easy to understand, regardless of language knowledge, experience, or concentration level.

- Example: Universal Symbols

NO ✗
YES ✓
No mask, no entry.

**Perceptible Information**

- Clearly communicates regardless of sensory abilities or ambient conditions.

- Example: Train Station Platform

**Tolerance for Error**

- Minimizes hazards & consequences from accident or misuse.

- Example: Car auto unlocks when driver exits but the key remains inside

**Low Physical Effort**

- Effectively & easily used with minimum effort.

- Example: Ramp to building

**Size & Space for Approach and Use**

- Appropriate size & space is provided for approach, reach, manipulate, and use for all body sizes, postures, or mobility.

- Example: Multi-level service desk, or automatic sinks

**Included** by **Design**

# 7 Principles of Universal Design

https://includedbydesign.com/universal-design-101/

# Universal Design for Learning

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# Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal design for learning (UDL) is defined as a framework for designing curricula that enable all individuals to gain knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for learning.

- UDL recognizes that if students can't access information, they can't learn it.
- UDL classroom: materials are accessible for all types of learners.
- Many options for reading, including print, digital, text-to-speech and audiobooks.
- Digital texts - options for text enlargement, choices for screen color and contrast.
- Videos have captions, and there are transcripts for audio.

| Representation<br>Principle 1 | Action and Expression<br>Principle 2 | Engagement<br>Principle 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Presenting information and course content in multiple formats so that all students can access it | Allowing students alternatives to express or demonstrate their learning | Stimulating students' interests and motivation for learning in a variety of ways |

| *Examples* | *Examples* | *Examples* |
|---|---|---|
| • Provide alternatives for accessing information (e.g., visual, auditory)<br>• Provide or activate background knowledge in multiple ways (e.g., pre-teaching concepts, using advanced organizers) | • Provide options for responding (e.g., keyboard instead of pen to complete a writing assignment)<br>• Provide options for completing assignments using different media (e.g., text, speech, film, music) | • Provide options that increase the relevance and authenticity of instructional activities (e.g., using money to teach math, culturally significant activities)<br>• Provide options that encourage collaboration and communication (e.g., peer tutoring) |
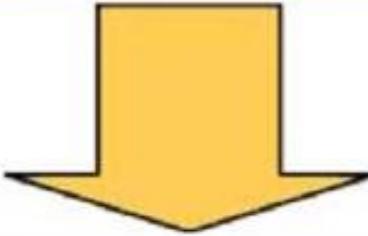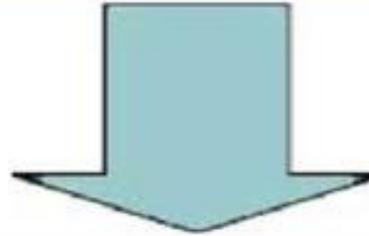
# Examples of UDL

⏰ Extra writing time

💬 Sign language interpreters

✏️ Note takers or scribes

🎧 Assistive listening devices

Exams in alternative formats

📄 Written materials in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, computer or audiotape readers

# Accessibility on campus



Induction Loop System

Assistive Tech

Tactile Paving
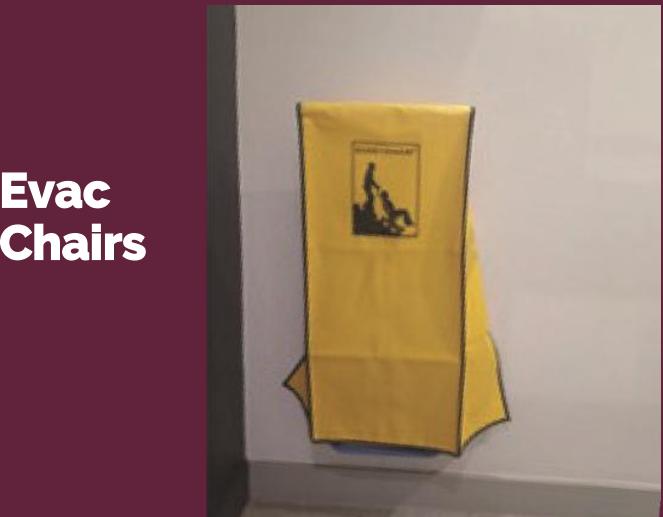
Evac Chairs

Chairlifts

Stair nosing/lines for depth perception

# Our rich diversity
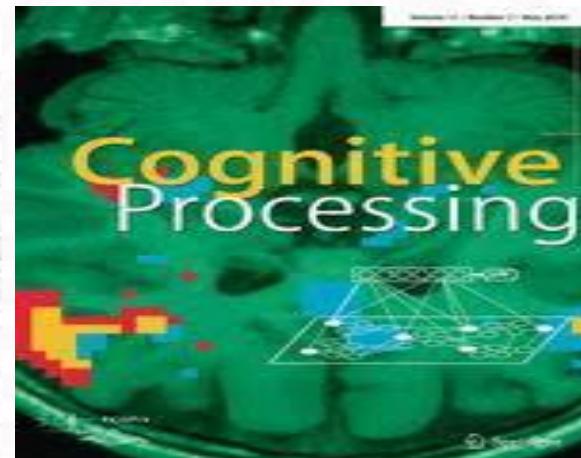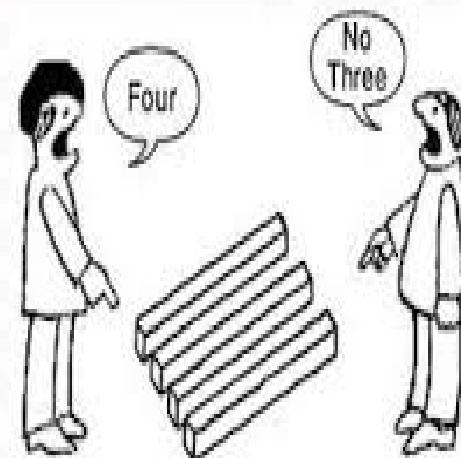
# Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET Education and Training Sector (2018)

1) Teaching & Learning to reflect social inclusion in curriculum; critically engage and improve teaching & learning access and support

2) Physical environment – to take universal design into account

3) Standardise support services – no standard across institutions esp with students with disabilities

4) Career development – collaborate with other units

5) Sport & recreation – collaborate with others

# What could universal access look like on campus?

1. What do we already see?

2. Where are the gaps?

3. What do we need to fill gaps?

- Your students are more diverse than you may realise. Human variability is the norm, not the exception.

- "Disability Justice" - think critically and transformatively about disability

- Importance of listening to people with disabilities and then applying that across the board:

- More time across the board

- Ways to be included

- Look at richness of inclusion

- Ableism not alone but acts with racism, sexism

- Discrimination based on ability / fitting the HE mould

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- "Go to the Disability Unit" – they will fix you / help you sort out your problems is problematic

- During pandemic – sudden flexibility vs post COVID, back to the mould / lack of flexibility

- Workplace – extensions to deadlines / flexibility vs University rigidity

- We retrofit instead of innovate/co-create solutions with students

  - Give options (e.g. type your test or write your test)

  - Open book assessments

  - Adjusting time on quizzes

  - Fixes / retrofits / no lasting & transformative changes made to

    options/flexibility/ perpetuate stereotyping vs people

    variability

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- STEM courses – untapped re students with disabilities

  - CHANGE how people participate

  - CHANGE how people attend

  - CHANGE notion of time / deadlines / extra time

- Above notions all controlled by able-bodied people / academic

privilege

"…in theory and practice, we recognize the ways that teaching can

be universally designed – how we might create an enabling space

for learning and a way to think broadly and inclusively about ability"

(Dolmage, 2017)

- How best to engage their experience and opinions to optimize their potential

# Disability is everyone's business on campus, not just the Disability Unit

- Transportation Services

- Faculty – classroom & staffroom

- Support Services

- Technical services

- Top Management all the way down

- Learning Management System

- Security & groundsmen

- Assessments

- Facilities Management

- Website

- Events management

# National Strategic Framework on Universal Design and Access (Department Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2021

*Although mainstreaming gender, disability and age consideration is a prerequisite of an inclusive society, without universal access, these groups are largely ignored in planning and provision of services in the public and private sector. This includes physical and or environmental accessibility, removing barriers, providing access through alternative communication and information in accessible formats, as a standard.*

## RESOURCES on CAMPUS

1. The contact person at the venue/SU buildings facilities person should be able to guide you regarding venue accessibility.
2. Queries about reading material accessibility: Braille@sun.ac.za.
3. Sign Language interpreters: SASLIbooking@sun.ac.za - book well in advance.
4. Mobile hearing devices: jlo@sun.ac.za / Rudi le Roux rlr@sun.ac.za
5. Induction Loop Systems - the relevant Facilities Manager of the specific environment
6. Contact Stephne Francken (sfrancken@sun.ac.za) or the specific
7. Facilities Manager of the environment regarding venues and physical accessibility on campus (respectively).
8. Accessible transport: contact the Transportation Services-Wendy Robyn (wrobyn@sun.ac.za) to hire an accessible vehicle
9. For any other queries contact disability@sun.ac.za

# FURTHER READING

1. Brown, N. (2021). Lived Experiences of Ableism in Academia. Strategies for Inclusion in Higher Education. Policy Press.

2. Burgstahler, S & Cory, R (2010). Universal Design in Higher Education. From Principles to Practice. Harvard Education Press

3. Code for Management Practices for Employment Equity (2019) – Stellenbosch University

4. Dalton, E. & Gronseth, S. (2020). Universal Access Through Inclusive Instructional Design. International Perspectives on UDL

5. Disability Access Policy (2018). Stellenbosch University (under review)

6. Dolmage, Jay. (2023). Academic Ableism: A conversation with Jay Dolmage (You Tube)

7. Dolmage, Jay (2017). Academic Ableism. Disability and Higher Education. University of Michigan Press.

8. Framework on Universal Design and Access, Department Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (2021)

9. Luescher, Thierry M.; Mncwango, Bongiwe; Fongwa, Samuel N.; Oppelt, Thelma; Mthombeni, Zama; and Paterson, Mark (2023). The State of Transformation in South Africa's Public Universities. Research Report of the Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in the South African Public Universities (TOC). Pretoria; TOC/DHET

10. Lynch, S. & Macklin, J. (n.d.). Academic Ableism in Higher *(a 3-page read)*

11. National Strategic Framework on Universal Design & Universal Access. (2021) Dept Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

12. Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET Education and Training Sector (2018)

Time to clear the muddy waters...