

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) takes into account the how, why, and what of learning. It is an evidence-based framework that was developed from neuroscience regarding how humans learn. Through intentional instruction and assessment design, this framework promotes access, participation, and progress for many learners' needs (CAST, 2018). It considers not only how learners acquire knowledge, but also how they engage with the content being taught. UDL acknowledges that the unique learning abilities of each individual learner are as different as their distinctive fingerprints.

“Universal Design does not imply ‘one size fits all’ but rather acknowledges the need for alternatives to suit many different people’s needs...the essence of [Universal Design] is flexibility and the inclusion of alternatives to adapt to the myriad variations in learner needs, styles, and preferences.”

(ROSE AND MEYER, 2000)

HOW DO EDUCATORS FACILITATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES?

Educators facilitate learning opportunities by:

- anticipating barriers and seeking solutions
- designing for accessibility by using an inclusive and equitable lens
- establishing clear goals with flexible means of learning and assessment



HOW DO EDUCATORS IMPLEMENT UDL?

Educators implement the CAST UDL Guidelines to support all learners.

The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning. These guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.



Engagement (The Why)

For purposeful, motivated learners, stimulate interest and motivation for learning.

For example:* Ensuring students feel safe and welcome in the learning environment; Stating the goal of the lesson or activity



Representation (The What)

For resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways.

For example:* Use graphic organizers, video, online options, audio, and/or illustrations; Provide context, background knowledge, and clarify vocabulary and symbols



Action & Expression (The How)

For strategic, goal-directed learners, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.

For example:* Provide rubrics, peer to peer assessment, formative assessment, and self assessment; Optimize access to tools and inclusive technologies for all learners

(ADAPTED FROM CAST, 2018)

**These examples are not an exhaustive list, but potential UDL methods*



For further information, please visit The UDL Guidelines by CAST (udlguidelines.cast.org) and click on the interactive table (right corner).



REFERENCES

Rose, D., and A. Meyer. (2000). Universal design for learning, associate editor column. *Journal of Special Education Technology* 15 (1): 66-67

CAST (2018). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2* [Chart]. udlguidelines.cast.org

CAST (2018). *UDL & the Learning Brain* [Graphic]. cast.org/products-services/resources/2018/udl-learning-brain-neuroscience