

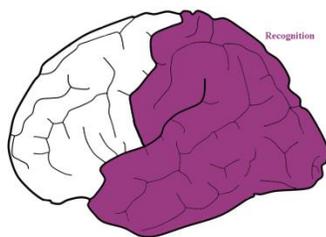
Universal Design for Learning: Synopsis

Definition: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a proactive design of curricula (educational goals, methods, materials, and assessments) that enable all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. This is accomplished by simultaneously providing rich supports for learning and reducing barriers to the curriculum, while maintaining high achievement standards for all students.

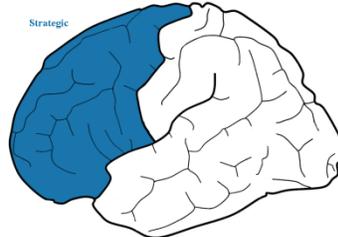
Definition of UDL included in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008 (HEOA)ⁱ

Universal design for learning (UDL) means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that- (A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.

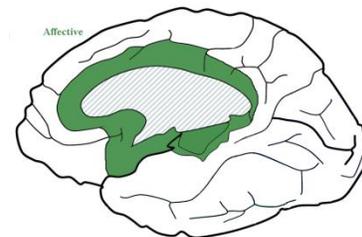
Through research on how the brain processes information, Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)ⁱⁱ has identified three primary brain networks and the roles they play in learning. The three UDL principles are listed below.



I. Provide Multiple Means of
Representation



II. Provide Multiple Means of
Action and Expression



III. Provide Multiple Means of
Engagement

- I. Multiple Means of Representation- (the “what” of learning). This principle is based on the brain’s recognition networks- the networks used to identify and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Examples include: text size, color contrast, captions, symbolic representation, pre-taught vocabulary, chunking information, activating prior knowledge
- II. Multiple Means of Action and Expression- (the “how” of learning). This principle is based on the brain’s strategic network- the networks used for planning and performing tasks. There are a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned including: alternatives to pen & pencil tasks, drawing/illustrations, speech to text software, manipulatives including base ten blocks, web applications, scaffolding instruction, prompts, checklists, short term objectives
- III. Multiple Means of Engagement- (the “why” of learning). This principle is based on the brain’s affective dimensions. Multiple options encourage active engagement and motivation to learn.

Background and benefit of UDL: Universal Design originated in architecture and urban planning, as part of a movement to begin designing building and other structures that would accommodate the widest spectrum of users, including those with disabilities, right from the start. UDL originated at Center for Applied Technology (CAST) where, “students are provided with scaffolds and supports to deeply understand and engage with standards-based material. They not only have access to content and facts, but they learn to ask questions, find information, and use that information effectively. They learn how to learn.”



Why UDL is effective?

Latest information places the rate of graduation with a regular high school diploma at approximately 62% nationwide. One in four students with LD drops out of school. The use of UDL designed curriculum has the potential to provide new and different ways to engage students with Learning Disabilities, increasing their interest in learning and decreasing their risk of dropping out. ⁱⁱⁱ

UDL ensures preparedness for student’s future. Students should not be limited to be taught primarily in a world of print. They need to understand all literacies and tools that will be critical in their future. ^{iv}

All students benefit due to minimizing barriers to learning and maximizing learning opportunities. ^v

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Universal Design for Learning
<http://ok.gov/sde/universal-design>



ⁱ http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ315.110.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cast.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ Cortiella, Candace 2008 A Parent’s Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL). National Center for Learning Disabilities. P. 6

^{iv} Cortiella, Candace 2008 A Parent’s Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL). National Center for Learning Disabilities. P. 7

^v Cortiella, Candace 2008A Parent’s Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL). National Center for Learning Disabilities. P. 13