

16_UDL

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Welcome to the Inclusive Education course.

This module deals with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), its principles and guidelines to incorporate the UDL principles in course design to enhance the learning experience of all students.

The tutorial consists of 4 parts:

It starts with an introduction about: What is UDL? For whom is UDL? How is the UDL framework organised?

It then proceeds with the 3 UDL principles and their guidelines used as a tool in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning:

multiple ways of representing knowledge

multiple means of action and expression

and multiple means of engagement

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Let us start with explaining what is UDL.

UDL is an educational framework offering a set of tangible principles helping teachers to design and deliver flexible approaches to teaching and learning processes that address the needs of all students within diverse classrooms.

UDL was developed by The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

UDL contests the traditional 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum

It draws teachers' attention to the fact that: 'Students are no longer thought of as disabled or unable to learn, but rather the curriculum is understood to inhibit some students from accessing and learning content'.

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For whom is UDL?

Universal Design for Learning is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that helps all students of all ages, experiences, backgrounds, interests, learning styles, and abilities.

With full credit to CAST for creating the UDL framework, we can say that the UDL framework is organised into:

3 broad principles, following

9 guidelines, and

31 checkpoints.

When taken together, these elements form a coherent and meaningful set of guidelines for specific, research-based practices that can support diverse learners.

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We now proceed with the first UDL principle and guidelines: multiple ways of representing knowledge

Teachers should offer multiple ways of representing knowledge.

As learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend the information that is presented to them, teachers should:

- provide options for perception via tangible methods and measures, such as:
- displaying information in a flexible format,
- offering alternatives to exclusively auditory information,
- offering alternatives for exclusively visual information

Teachers have a responsibility to provide diverse, practical options for understanding and processing the language and symbols that they use in their delivery of course material via methods such as:

- clarifying vocabulary and symbols
- clarifying syntax and structure
- supporting students in the process of decoding text, mathematical notation, and symbols
- promoting understanding across and between languages and culture
- illustrating points through multiple media forms

Teachers should provide options for comprehension via:

- activating or supplying students' background knowledge
- highlighting patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
- guiding information processing and visualisation
- maximising transfer and generalisation

We now get on with the second UDL principle and guidelines: multiple means of action and expression.

Learners differ in the ways that they navigate learning environments and express what they know, therefore teachers should provide options for physical action via:

- varying options for students' response to and navigation of course materials
- optimising access to tools and assistive technologies

Teachers should provide options for expression and communication

- using multiple media for communication
- using multiple tools for construction and composition
- building fluencies with graduated levels of support for students' practice and performance

Teachers should provide options for executive functions via:

- guiding appropriate goal-setting
- supporting planning and strategy development
- facilitating the management of information and resources
- enhancing students' capacity for monitoring progress

Finally we discuss the third UDL principle and guidelines: the multiple means of engagement.

Learners differ significantly in what attracts their attention and engages their interest.

Therefore, teachers should provide diverse options for recruiting students' interest via:

- optimising individual choice and autonomy
- optimising the relevance, value, and authenticity of information sources

minimising distractions

Teachers should provide options for sustaining students' effort and persistence via:
highlighting goals and objectives
varying demands and resources to offer challenges
fostering collaboration and community
increasing mastery-oriented feedback

Teachers should provide options for self regulation via:
promoting students' expectations and beliefs in ways that optimise motivation
facilitating personal coping skills, mechanisms, and strategies
developing students' self-assessment and reflection skills

In this way, an UDL approach can better meet the needs of a wider range of students, increase student engagement, and enhance academic success for all students.