What is UDL?

**Universal Design for Learning** is a set of principles for curriculum development that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

**Why is UDL necessary?**

Individuals bring a huge variety of skills, needs, and interests to learning. Neuroscience reveals that these differences are as varied and unique as our DNA or fingerprints. Three primary brain networks come into play:

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| Universal Design for Learning |
| **Recognition Networks**The “what” of learning**image of a brain with the back portion highlighted**How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Identifying letters, words, or an author’s style are recognition tasks.checkmarkPresent information and content in different ways | Strategic NetworksThe “how” of learningimage of a brain with the front portion highlightedPlanning and performing tasks. How we organize and express our ideas. Writing an essay or solving a math problem are strategic tasks.checkmarkDifferentiate the ways that students can express what they know | Affective NetworksThe “why” of learningimage of a cutout of the inside of the brain with the core highlightedHow learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions.checkmarkStimulate interest and motivation for learning |

**Source:** CAST—What is UDL? (<http://www.cast.org/research/udl>)

**Principles of Universal Design for Learning.** (Source: National Center on Universal Design for Learning)

Principle I. Provide Multiple Means of Representation

**Guideline 1: Provide options for perception**

* Offer ways of customizing the display of information
* Offer alternatives for auditory information
* Offer alternatives for visual information

**Guideline 2: Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols**

* Clarify vocabulary and symbols
* Clarify syntax and structure
* Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols
* Promote understanding across languages
* Illustrate through multiple media

**Guideline 3: Provide options for comprehension**

* Activate or supply background knowledge
* Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
* Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation
* Maximize transfer and generalization

### Principle II. Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

**Guideline 4: Provide options for physical action**

* Vary the methods for response and navigation
* Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

**Guideline 5: Provide options for expression and communication**

* Use multiple media for communication
* Use multiple tools for construction and composition
* Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

**Guideline 6: Provide options for executive functions**

* Guide appropriate goal-setting
* Support planning and strategy development
* Facilitate managing information and resources
* Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

### Principle III. Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

**Guideline 7: Provide options for recruiting interest**

* Optimize individual choice and autonomy
* Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
* Minimize threats and distractions

**Guideline 8: Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence**

* Heighten salience of goals and objectives
* Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
* Foster collaboration and community
* Increase mastery-oriented feedback

**Guideline 9: Provide options for self-regulation**

* Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation
* Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
* Develop self-assessment and reflection