Universal Design for Learning: What Is It and Where Does It Fit in My Teaching?

March 19, 2013
10:00-11:00 a.m.

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

WHAT IS IT
AND WHERE DOES IT FIT IN MY TEACHING?

Dr. Nancy Aguinaga
Southeast Missouri State University

Goals

• Develop understanding of UDL as an overarching framework for inclusive instructional design.

• Identify the principles of UDL

• Identify ways UDL can provide access to the general ed curriculum for all.

• Action Plan
Universal Design for Learning

**Fist to 5**
(In this case type 1-5 in the chat box)

Universal Design Origin

Movement in architecture

“Consider the needs of broadest possible range of users from the beginning”
- Architect, Ron Mace

Examples of Universal Design
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Origin

CAST (not for profit research development organization) believes:

“barriers to learning are not, in fact, inherent in the capacities of learners, but instead arise in learners' interactions with inflexible educational goals, materials, methods, and assessments.”

*Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age*, p. vi

David Rose

Paradigm Shift

Not to “fix” the child who has a problem instead

“Fix” the curriculum (goals, methods, materials, and assessments) so that it can meet diverse learner needs
Universal Design for Learning

- A curriculum framework - organized around 3 principles based on the learning sciences

How UDL can provide access for all
  - Integration of effective teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms to reduce barriers for students

- Flexible and supportive for all

- Decreases the barriers that limit access

- Based on brain research

Primary barrier to making expert learners of all students

- Inflexible, one-size-fits-all curricula
  - unintentional barriers to learning

Diversity is now the norm, not the exception
Why is UDL effective?

• Learning is **unique** to individuals
• Abilities are not fixed - **continually shift** and are in relationship to the environment
• Intersection between individual and **environment**
• An average student is **mythical**
• The learning brain has 3 main networks- **recognition**-what, **strategic**-how, **affective**-why of learning

UDL and the Learning Brain

Recognition networks: “the **what** of learning”

identify and interpret patterns of sound, light, taste, smell, and touch

http://www.cast.org
UDL and the Learning Brain

Strategic networks: “the how of learning”
plan, execute, and monitor actions and skills

http://www.cast.org

UDL and the Learning Brain

Affective networks: “the why of learning”
evaluate and set priorities

http://www.cast.org

UDL and Brain Research video
UDL and the Learning Brain

- One must recognize information, ideas, and concepts
- One must be able to apply strategies to process the information
- One must be engaged

Vygotsky

http://www.cast.org
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PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING FRAMEWORK

- **Principle 1:**
  - To support recognition learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation/representation

- **Principle 2:**
  - To support strategic learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship.

- **Principle 3:**
  - To support affective learning, provide multiple, flexible options for engagement
Why is UDL necessary?

The variance across individuals is the norm

Diversity is what makes us great

Need for personalized learning

Sir Ken Robinson

Universal (Inclusive) Instructional Design

Collaboration

Teacher operation

Student operation

Teacher level

Content enhancements

Student level

Active engagement

Active student response

Embedded learning strategies

Inclusive learning environment

Effective inclusion can be best served by a systems thinking approach - multiple tactics implemented and integrated in a coordinated manner
Critical Elements of UDL

- Clear Goals
- Intentional Planning for Learner Variability
- Flexible Methods and Materials
- Timely Progress Monitoring

Barriers that slow student progress

- Organizational problems
- Loses focus
- Low vision
- Limited English
- Fine motor problems
- Easily discouraged
- Trouble with key concepts
Planning for Academic Diversity

More barriers

- Funding Sources
  - Many resources are free or extremely reasonable
- Deficits in teacher knowledge
- Lack of teacher time, training, teamwork related to UDL
  - Develop school teacher tech teams, website, mentoring
- Availability of workshops and training sessions
- Adjustment of teacher attitudes and dispositions regarding technology
Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age

Recent changes in technology:

- Make it possible to communicate with more people than ever before
- Enable learning any time, any place, any how
- Facilitate personalization
- Promote openness, which promotes sharing
- Promote participation in content, knowledge, and news production
- Enable collaboration across the world

UDL and Digital Media

NIMAS

http://www.cast.org

BUT....
Technology alone cannot accomplish all

- New technologies and digital media hold enormous promise for ALL but especially those with exceptionalities
- To be effective, technology-based learning needs to take place within a universally designed curriculum
- Goals, assessments, methods, and materials support learning through multiple means of representation, expression and engagement
Separate the goals from the means

Not always tech - there is power in digital text but need to think about FIRM goals and FLEXIBLE needs!

Using a curriculum that is rooted in the 3 UDL principles, students have:

1. Options for how they learn
2. Choices which will engage their interest
3. Choices for how they demonstrate their learning

Teachers provide:
1. Flexible ways of presenting lesson content
2. Flexible options for student engagement
3. Flexible methods of expression and assessment

Challenge & Engagement

The flexibility of digital curriculum makes it easier than ever to adjust the challenge level of academic tasks.

The concept of a volume control slider is a useful metaphor for describing the supports available in a universally designed learning environment.

Tomlinson (1999) uses the term “equalizer” to discuss the concept of a slider.

Edyburn, 2008
UDL is on the map in Washington

“Transforming Education”
“Systemic Change”

• U.S. Secretary of Education highlights UDL
  – Letter to Congress
  “The model of learning described in this plan calls for engaging and empowering personalized learning experiences for learners of all ages. The model stipulates that we focus what and how we teach to match what people need to know and how they learn. It calls for using state-of-the-art technology and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) concepts to enable, motivate, and inspire all students to achieve, regardless of background, languages, or disabilities. It calls for ensuring that our professional educators are well connected to the content and resources, data and information, and peers and experts they need to be highly effective. And it calls for leveraging the power of technology to support continuous and lifelong learning.”
Turning to UDL

• States and provinces across the US and Canada are turning to UDL as a means of helping educators meet the demand to provide standards-based education to all learners, while recognizing and honoring individual variability and diversity.

• General Education Initiative

• The U. S. Dept. of Education, the National Science Foundation and major foundations and corporations are supporting initiatives to expand UDL

"UDL is really a merging of general education and special education, a sharing of responsibility, resources and ownership. It gets away from the "their kids/our kids" divide between general ed. and special ed." –

David Rose
A Practical Reader in Universal Design for Learning
Review

Paradigm Shift?

Intervention?

Why?

Principles?

Questions???
Taking Action

• What do I want to implement?
• Benefits of Implementation
• What does success look like?
• Possible barriers
• Possible solutions
• Needed resources
• Timeline

Where Do I Go From Here?

Resources

CAST – Center for Applied Special Technology

AIM- National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials

Research: UDL-IRN

IRIS Center - UDL
• What did I learn?

• Why did I learn it?

• How can I use it?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Is

Instructional design grounded in effective teaching practices
Maxwell Maltz, author of Psycho-cybernetics

“It takes 21 days to form a habit.”

Thank you

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