

Creating Inclusive Interdisciplinary Training Programs

Center for Leadership in Disability
Georgia State University
October 7, 2021



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Today, we will answer:

- What is the purpose of Universal Design for Learning?
- What is plain language and why is it important?
- What is the difference between accessibility and accommodations?
- What are natural supports and how do we develop them?

Presenters



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Familiarity with UDL

1 = Just beginning, what does 'UDL' even stand for?

2 = I know a little about UDL

3 = Ask me anything about UDL: I could lead this session!

“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.”



Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- A mindset for how to design learning environments
 - All individuals can gain knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for learning
 - Reduces barriers to the curriculum while maintaining high achievement standards for all
 - Accounts for variability and context
 - Focuses on changing the curriculum, not the student

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UDL Core Concepts

- Goals
- Variability
- Context (Environment)

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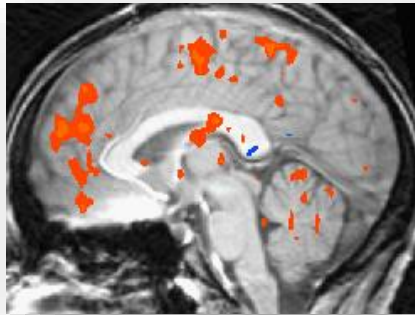
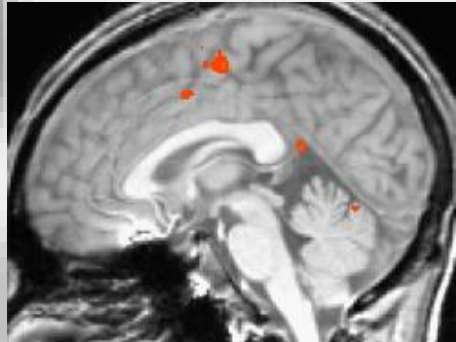
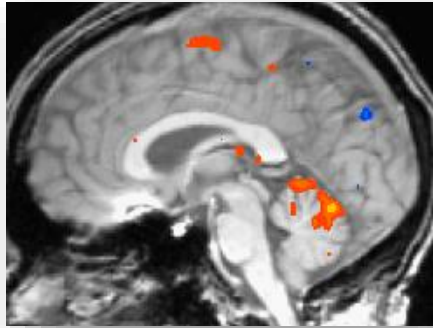
Concept 1: Goals

- Must drive the learning process
- Should be shared and understood by all
- Consider various ways to meet the goal



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Concept 2: Variability



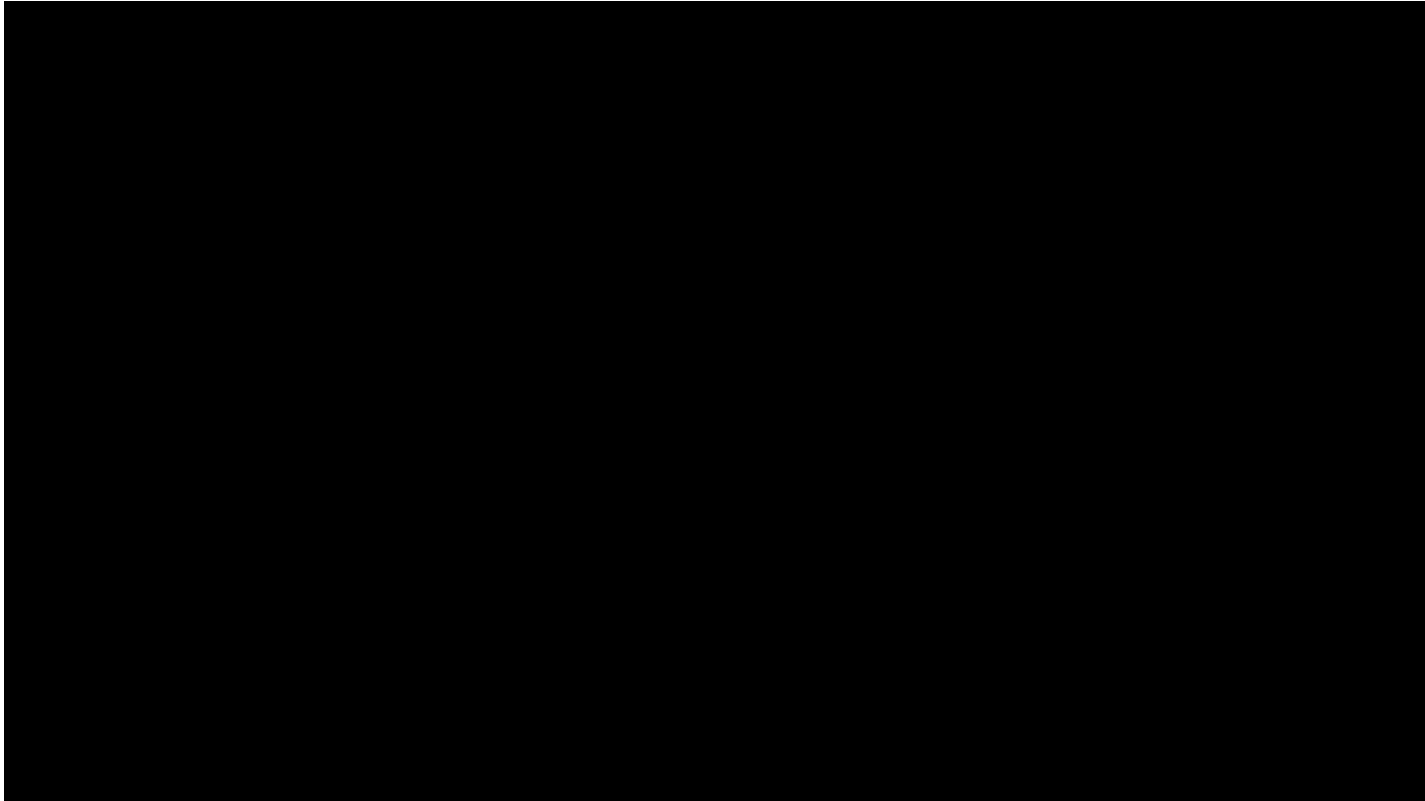
- Aims to dispel the idea of a typical and atypical brain
- UDL encourages us to recognize that everyone has variability related to processing and learning

Image credit: Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning (Permission granted)

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Does one size really fit all?



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Concept 3: Context (Environment)

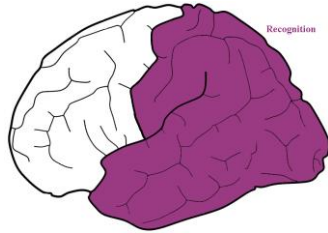


- Context includes (but is not limited to):
 - Curriculum
 - Physical environment
 - Materials/ Handouts
 - Teaching Methods
 - Routines/Procedures
 - Activities

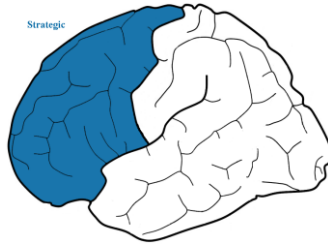
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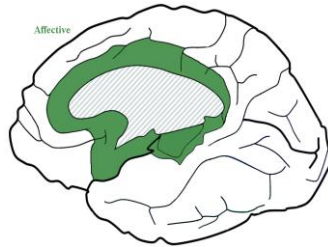
Learning Brain & UDL Guidelines



- **Recognition:** the “what” of learning
 - Multiple means of representation



- **Strategic Network:** the “how”
 - Multiple means of action and expression



- **Affective Network:** the “why”
 - Multiple means of engagement



Representation

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

Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols

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

Provide options for perception

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

RECOGNITION NETWORKS:
THE **WHAT** OF LEARNING



Representation

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

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Barriers in Lecture Format	Barriers in Reading Text
Hearing Impairment	Poor Vision
Attention issues	Inability to decode text
Poor memory	Poor reading comprehension skills
Lack of background knowledge	Slow reading; insufficient time to get through materials
Unfamiliar vocabulary	Unfamiliar vocabulary



Action and Expression

Provide options for executive functions

- Guide appropriate goal-setting
- Support planning and strategy development
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

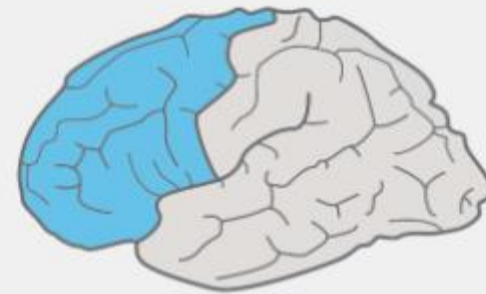
Provide options for expression and communication

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

Provide options for physical action

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

STRATEGIC NETWORKS:
THE **HOW** OF LEARNING



Action & Expression

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

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Barriers to Written Responses	Barriers to Objective Tests
Poor handwriting	Test anxiety
Poor motor skills	Questions are skipped/answers are tracked incorrectly
Not familiar with proper format	Misunderstood/misread directions
Spelling or grammar difficulties	Poor test-taking skills and strategies
Difficulties putting thoughts and ideas in writing	Poor recall/memory

Engagement

Provide options for self-regulation

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

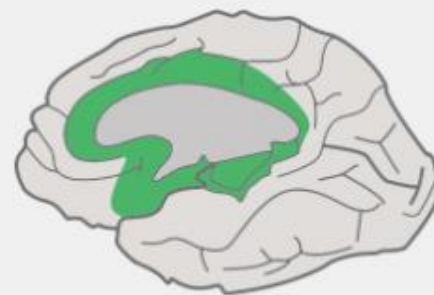
Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence

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

Provide options for recruiting interest

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

AFFECTIVE NETWORKS:
THE **WHY** OF LEARNING



Engagement

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

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Barriers to Engagement

Trainees don't understand purpose of lesson

Assignment is too difficult

Trainees don't perceive the value or utility of assignment

Lack of coping strategies

Subject matter perceived as boring or irrelevant

Trainee embarrassment

Executive functioning difficulties



Team Approach

- UDL requires:
 - Ongoing reflection, discussion and evaluation
 - Multiple perspectives and experiences
 - Collaboration is key
 - Resources and time must be allocated on an ongoing basis
 - Buy-in from leadership from the beginning



Things to Remember

- Universal Design for Learning is a process not a product
- You will fail more than you succeed, but failure will lead to opportunities for continued improvement
- Building relationships with learners is necessary
- Explain that supports are always AVAILABLE but do not assume that supports are NEEDED
- Do not choose presenters/teachers strictly on their content expertise, but also on their abilities to adapt to your learning community



Small Group Discussion

How would you teach trainees about person-centered care using the principles of UDL:

Representation, Action and Expression, and Engagement?



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In your groups:

1. Provide 3 examples of how you could represent this information
2. Provide 3 examples of how you would engage your audience
3. Provide 3 ways that you could assess your audience's understanding of the material



Debrief

1. Provide 3 examples of how you could represent this information
2. Provide 3 examples of how you'd engage your audience
3. Provide 3 ways that you could assess your audience's understanding of the material



Plain Language



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Familiarity with Plain Language

1 = Just beginning, what does plain language even mean?

2 = I know a little about Plain Language

3 = Ask me anything about Plain Language: I could lead this session!

Plain Language

The **Plain Writing Act of 2010** defines plain language as:

Writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.

Plain Language

Techniques:

- Reader-centered organization
- “You” and other pronouns
- Active voice, not passive
- Short sentences and paragraphs
- Common, everyday words
- Easy-to-follow design features (lists, headers, tables)

Plain Language Components

Audience and Purpose

- What are you hoping to communicate?
- What do you want your audience to take away?
- Who is your audience?
- What information does your audience already know?
- What might they need to know?

Structure

- What format will be best for the audience to clearly follow and understand the text?
- Structures to consider:
 - Use summaries to present key information
 - Divide material into equal chunks
 - Make clear connections between sections

Design

- Consider the following:
 - Layout
 - Font/Typography
 - Use of infographics
- Utilize white space to create separation between sections
- Meaningful headers
- Fonts like Arial or Times New Roman
- Font size should be 18 or higher
- High contrast

Expression

- Consider the following:
 - Tone: Formal yet conversational
- Word Choice: Choose the simplest words to represent your ideas
- Jargon: Avoid, avoid, avoid!
- Sentences: Keep short and simple
- Verbs: Active voices

Evaluation

- Review before sending
- Check Readability and Accessibility of the document
- Get feedback from others for large projects before sharing them widely



Small Group Discussion

Translate Into Plain Language:

The majority of research on the early identification of ASD and related developmental disabilities (ASD/DD) is clinical focused with substantial bodies of work related to the investigation and development of screening tools; clinical assessments and diagnostic frameworks; clinical biases and comorbidities. Furthermore, early identification work from public health has historically focused on epidemiological analyses of ASD cases and age of identification.

(Used with permission of Dr. Brian Barger)

Translation Debrief

- Did you find that activity to be simple or difficult?
- What words did you need to remove or define?
- What was the passage's main idea?



What does **accessibility** mean to you?



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Accessibility and Accommodations

“**Accessibility** is what we should expect to be ready for us without asking or planning ahead. It can be provided by following an easy to implement set of standards and practices that make "adaptation" unnecessary. We can benefit from accessibility without announcing or explaining our disabilities. **Accommodation** is for adaptations that can't be anticipated or standardized. They are different for each individual.”

–Disability Thinking



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Inaccessible design excludes people.



Accommodations give access to whoever is there at the moment. They often require extra work.



Accessible design means that current and future viewers will have access, without extra work.



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Accessibility

- **Proactive Solution**
- Decisions made during the development process
- Possible accommodations are considered and incorporated without request
- Everyone benefits
- Not required but gaining momentum
- Aligns with LEND values

Accommodations

- **Reactive Solution**
- Adjustments made AFTER the fact
- Individuals often must disclose their disability to receive these supports
- Typically address a specific need
- Required by the ADA: “Reasonable accommodations”

Small Group Discussion

How does your program **promote** accessibility? How is accessibility **built into** your program's structure?



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Natural

- Personal associations and relationships typically developed in the community that enhance an individual's quality and security of life
- Possible supports:
 - Family relationships
 - Friendships
 - Fellow students or employees
 - Associations developed through participation in clubs, organizations, and other civic activities

Paid/Formal

- Resources or services that an individual needs to be able to achieve their desired quality of life and independence
- Possible supports:
 - Caregivers
 - Medical and behavior health professionals
 - Care coordinators
 - Social service providers



What natural supports are **built into** your LEND program?



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Building Community



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How do you **create** a sense of community within your program?
How do you help trainees **develop** relationships with one another?



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Main Takeaways

- Universal Design for Learning is a framework used to create learning environments that work for all learners. The three principles of UDL are Representation, Action and Expression, and Engagement.
- Plain language helps us communicate information in clear and concise ways.
- Accessibility is a proactive approach while accommodations are a reactive approach.
- Natural supports enhance an individual's quality of life and ability to participate in their communities.

Any questions?



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