

Designing Learning with UDL Course Syllabus

Course Overview

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that helps educators design learning experiences that anticipate learner variability and reduce barriers before they impact learning. Rather than planning for the "average" learner, UDL encourages educators to create flexible pathways that allow all learners to engage with content, access information, and demonstrate understanding in meaningful ways.

Throughout this course, participants will explore the three principles of UDL, Engagement, Representation, and Action & Expression, and apply those principles to an authentic learning experience using a UDL Planner that is developed and refined throughout the course.

Goals

During this course, participants will:

- Understand the foundational principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Examine learner variability and identify barriers that may impact learning.
- Explore strategies that support learner engagement, representation, and action & expression.
- Apply the [UDL 3.0 Guidelines](#) developed by CAST to design flexible learning experiences that reduce barriers and support learner variability.
- Develop a UDL-informed learning experience using the UDL Planner.

Intended Audience

This introductory course is designed for K–12 teachers, technology and curriculum specialists, school administrators, and other school personnel interested in reducing barriers and supporting learner variability through Universal Design for Learning. Participants should be comfortable using email, accessing online resources, and navigating web-based course materials throughout the course.

Course Outline

Session One: Foundations of UDL

Participants will explore the foundational principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), examine learner variability, and identify barriers that may impact engagement, access, and participation. Through readings, videos, discussion, and the development of a UDL Planner, participants will consider how intentional instructional design can reduce barriers and support a wide range of learners.

Session Two: Design for Engagement

Participants will explore how the Engagement principle of UDL supports learner motivation, participation, and persistence. Through readings, discussion, and reflection, participants will examine strategies that promote relevance, learner voice, choice, collaboration, and authentic learning experiences while continuing to develop their UDL Planner.

Session Three: Representation and Action & Expression

Participants will explore how the Representation and Action & Expression principles of UDL support flexible access to learning and multiple ways for learners to demonstrate understanding. Through readings, discussion, and reflection, participants will continue developing their UDL Planner by identifying supports and flexible options that reduce barriers and support learner variability.

Session Four: Applying UDL to Planning & Instruction

Participants will apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning by completing and refining a UDL-informed learning experience. Through lesson examples, peer feedback, and reflection, participants will finalize their UDL Planner while considering how intentional planning decisions can reduce barriers and support learner variability.