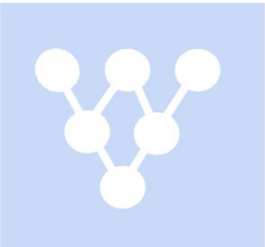


Universal Design for Learning is a framework that embraces variability, removes barriers, and supports all students in becoming “expert learners” through specific strategies that are based on what we know about how we learn (the UDL Guidelines).



CAST describes UDL as “a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people, based on scientific insights into how humans learn”*. It is the framework and foundation for designing and delivering instruction that supports the variability of all learners, which makes it the best practice for teaching all students in an inclusive learning environment.



UDL believes that everyone is a variable learner and rejects the idea of an “average learner”. “Yet our educational system is designed around the idea that most people learn the same way and that a “fair” education is an identical one”*. *Dive Deeper.* Todd Rose explains this concept in the “[Myth of Average](#)”



UDL believes that barriers are in the environment and not the student. The learning context itself (e.g. the environment, the methods, the materials) effects whether an individual characteristic of a student becomes a barrier to learning, or not. Think of a student who is deaf. If a class is taught in spoken English only, this presents a barrier. If the same instruction is provided in sign language that barrier may be eliminated. The disability is contextual, and not inherent in a person. A major goal in implementing UDL is to remove barriers and design to the edges of your classroom

Dive Deeper: Watch master educator Shelley Moore explain these concepts in “[the Bowling Analogy](#)”



The GOAL of UDL is to create learners who are...

Purposeful & Motivated

Resourceful & Knowledgeable

Strategic & Goal Directed

UDL believes that all learners, to be successful, must learn and grow *as learners*, not just build content knowledge alone. Classrooms need to become hubs of expert learning, where teachers support students in mastering these outcomes by modeling and supporting skill building and internalization of these skills.





Teachers are guided to provide students with...

Multiple Means of
Engagement
(The Affective Network)

Multiple Means of
Representation
(The Recognition Network)

Multiple Means of
Action & Expression
(The Strategic Network)

CAST created the UDL Guidelines as a scaffold for teachers to use as they build flexibility into the learning environment. These guidelines are based on three principles that directly relate to the learning networks of the brain.



*"Each of the nine guidelines emphasizes areas of learner variability that could present barriers, or in a well-designed learning experience, present leverage points and opportunities to optimize engagement with learning".**

It is important not to regard UDL as a "checklist". In a UDL environment, teaching is an iterative design process, where we are constantly thinking about how and why we are designing and delivering instruction and reflecting on how students are learning. The checkpoints under each guideline provide concrete suggestions for how to address and plan for the systematic variability that exists within any given classroom. These checkpoints, or strategies are *"based on a multiyear review of thousands of research articles that identified specific experimentally validated instructional techniques, adaptations and interventions"*.*

Dive Deeper: An interactive version (along with printable versions) of the UDL Guidelines can be found at <http://udlguidelines.cast.org/>. The research behind each checkpoint or strategy can also be found in the "research" link on each checkpoint.



"Everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

-Albert Einstein