



Inclusive Practices for Every Classroom

A UDL
(Universal Design
for Learning)
Approach



Introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)



Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based approach developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) in the 1990s to create inclusive and effective learning environments for all students. It is not a curriculum but a set of guiding principles for curriculum development that ensures equal learning opportunities for everyone. This resource is a quick guide to help educators understand the framework and how it can be applied in different types of classrooms with a wide range of students. Our goal is to assist teachers in creating more meaningful and inclusive instructional experiences for the wide range of students in their classrooms.

YOU WILL:

Review core UDL Principles

Apply principles for different classroom models

Discuss putting UDL into practice



CORE PRINCIPLES and CONNECTIONS

MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT

A learner's engagement in instruction can vary due to neurological, physical, cultural, and personal factors. UDL emphasizes guidelines for recruiting interest, sustaining effort, and self-regulation.

It is essential to promote student engagement by allowing students to make choices, optimizing relevance, minimizing distractions, offering differentiated levels of difficulty, and providing immediate feedback. Students should always practice new skills in multiple ways through diverse activities. This includes both online and offline experiences, using a variety of modalities to ensure true skill mastery.

MULTIPLE MEANS OF REPRESENTATION

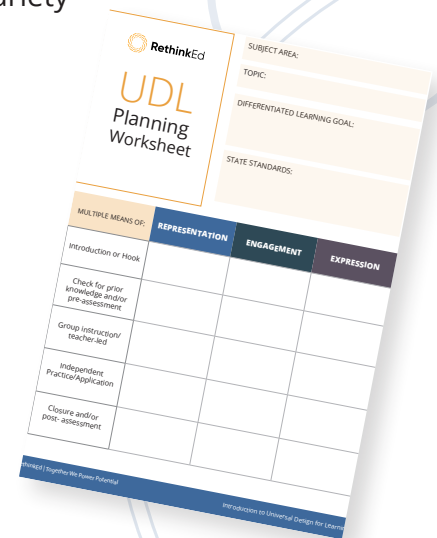
Learners have varying ways of perceiving and comprehending information. UDL provides three core guideline areas for diversifying the representation of information: perception, options for language, and comprehension.

Utilizing programs like RethinkEd and Vizzle as educational tools can help you align with these guidelines by offering customization options for displaying information, alternatives for auditory and visual information, and provide support for decoding text.

MULTIPLE MEANS OF ACTION AND EXPRESSION

Learners have differing ways of navigating a learning environment and expressing their knowledge.

UDL includes guidelines for diversification of physical presentation, expression, variation, and organization of responses to demonstrate learning. Create opportunities for students by offering various methods for student response and navigation, diverse media for communication, and options for constructing and composing content. Whether through the click of a button in a multiple-choice format or creative opportunities such as writing, drawing, and/or oral expression, students should be able to show what they know.



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SECTION 1

Supporting Low-Incidence Classrooms with UDL

Low-incidence classrooms are designed to support the needs of students in the public-school setting who experience moderate to intensive disabilities. Students, ages 5-21, are supported by teams of highly qualified professionals (intervention specialists, related service providers, and paraprofessionals). Applying the strategies for UDL can help increase inclusive practices across all classroom environments and providers.



Practical Strategies to Apply with Your Team with UDL Integration

Flexible Daily Scheduling: Provide daily schedules that incorporate flexibility and options to meet individual student needs.

Inclusive Classroom Setup: Create a map that demonstrates a flexible and universally designed physical environment. [See the “Well Designed Classroom”](#) for a resource on optimizing physical space and other considerations.

Aligned IEP (Individual Education Plan)

Supports: Discuss strategies with your team for aligning instruction with IEP goals while emphasizing UDL principles.

UDL-Infused Curriculum Focus: Highlight the importance of addressing core subjects through multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. Consider each of your core subject areas and pick a strategy that promotes inclusive practices when planning.

Promoting Independence and Accessibility with UDL:

Discuss how UDL can foster independence and meet accessibility needs for all students in your classroom. This can include settings on a computer program for teacher-directed classroom instruction and additional student settings. Everyone should be engaged at their optimal level of independence—features like text-to-speech, highlighting, and accessibility tools open doors for everyone in the classroom.

Data-Driven Decision-Making with UDL:

Data collection allows educators to gather insights into individual student progress and engagement, enabling them to make informed instructional decisions. Observation and note-taking can reveal important insights on student learning.

By collecting data on student performance, preferences, and challenges, teachers can tailor their lessons more effectively, providing personalized support and accommodations to ensure that all learners succeed. UDL and data collection work hand in hand to create more accessible and effective educational experiences for all students.



SECTION 2

Fostering Independence through Social, Life, and Transition/Vocational Skills Using UDL

Leveraging Universal Design for Learning strategies for students with an IEP is crucial, particularly when addressing the development of transition, vocational, life skills, and social skills. UDL ensures that the curriculum is accessible to every student, tailoring instruction to their unique needs and abilities. By applying UDL principles in teaching these essential skills, we not only empower students with IEPs to bridge the gap between school and adulthood successfully but also create an inclusive learning environment that benefits all.



Transition skills prepare students for life beyond the classroom, equipping them with the tools to navigate the complexities of adulthood. Vocational skills enable them to pursue meaningful employment opportunities. Life skills foster independence and self-sufficiency, while social skills facilitate meaningful interactions and connections in the community. UDL ensures that these critical skills are taught in ways that accommodate diverse learning styles, allowing every student to reach their full potential and develop the capacity to navigate the path to a successful, fulfilling future.

UDL-Independent Living Skills: Provide guidance on teaching independent living skills and self-reliance using UDL principles and offer schedules that accommodate diverse learning styles.

Academic Skills for Everyday Life with UDL: Incorporate academic skills into daily life and provide curriculum examples that offer multiple means of engagement and representation.

UDL-School-based Jobs: Apply UDL principles to school-based jobs, ensuring that all students can engage in skill-building opportunities. Make sure to provide differentiated opportunities for students (thinking about representation, engagement, action, and expression).

Community-Based Instruction with UDL: UDL principles can be integrated into community-based outings, making these experiences accessible to everyone.

Career Labs and Life Labs with UDL: Work with your team and discuss how UDL principles can be applied in district/school career labs or life labs to ensure inclusivity and engagement.

SECTION 3

Resource and Inclusion Targeted Academic Intervention through UDL

When thinking about inclusive practices and UDL, a few key features can help get planning and organization started. Remember that all learners should know the goal or objective. Integrate intentional but flexible options for students to engage in learning. Always provide students access to the resources they need from the beginning of a lesson.



Programs that plan intentionally for UDL should always provide differentiated resources for students that offer appropriate and diverse representation of concepts, engagement in instruction, and ways for students to express themselves and show what they know. This provides the opportunity for students to manage, master, and generalize their own learning.

UDL-Informed Resource Selection: Select resources with the full scope of UDL principles in mind to ensure accessibility for all learners.

IEP Alignment with UDL: Stress the importance of aligning instruction with individual IEP goals and objectives while considering UDL guidelines. Read all student's present levels of performance to find interests, accommodations, and modifications. These insights can shape instruction, providing opportunities for students to participate in meaningful ways.

State Standards and Progress Monitoring with UDL: UDL can be incorporated with state standards-aligned resources and various methods for progress monitoring, ensuring increased inclusivity. This is critical in addressing requirements for supporting both IEP goals and curriculum content as their

same-age peers.

UDL-Infused Instructional Settings: Compare small group instruction with one-on-one support and emphasize the benefits of collaboration between general education and special education teachers using UDL strategies.



SECTION 4

Courses Supporting High School Graduation Requirements with UDL



Ensuring ALL students have access to a UDL-aligned 4x4 (four English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies courses) model in high school is crucial. Applying the fundamental principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to core subjects provides fair and accessible educational opportunities for every learner.

UDL achieves this by offering a variety of ways to present information, making complex concepts understandable to a broad range of students. It also enhances engagement by providing multiple avenues for accessing and interacting with the curriculum, involving all learners. Furthermore, UDL promotes individuality and varied expression methods, allowing students to demonstrate their comprehension and skills according to their unique capabilities, thus removing obstacles to achievement. Ultimately, embracing UDL principles in the pursuit of high school graduation requirements creates an environment where every student can excel and be empowered in their learning journey.

UDL-Enhanced Learning Tools: Consider the use of UDL-informed learning tools, such as graphic organizers. Provide content at varied reading levels and use multisensory materials to enhance accessibility and engagement.

Supplemental Curriculum with UDL: Introduce courses like those offered through VizZle as a supplement to the general education curriculum, highlighting their alignment with UDL principles. Provide similar content with easier reading levels, highlight key vocabulary and concepts, include discussion questions throughout primary instruction, and provide opportunities for students to share and show what they know.

Subject-Based Examples with UDL: Discuss subject areas as a team, creating examples that apply UDL principles to those high school graduation requirements (i.e., Biology, English I, Algebra 1, and/or U.S. Government). Use programs that provide leveled instructional materials written at different reading levels and diverse representations of concepts for required high school courses. By integrating UDL principles into each subject, you ensure that the content is not only informative but also accessible and inclusive for a diverse range of learners and educators.



REFERENCES

<https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

Looking for resources to enhance and apply Universal Design for Learning best practices?

Vizzle



Request a Demo

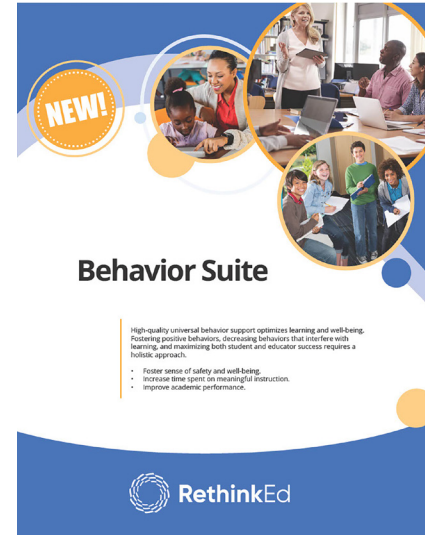
MTSS Training Series



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Comprehensive Behavior Suite



Behavior Suite

High-quality universal behavior support optimizes learning and well-being. Fostering positive behaviors, decreasing behaviors that interfere with learning, and maximizing both student and educator success requires a holistic approach.

- Foster sense of safety and well-being.
- Increase time spent on meaningful instruction.
- Improve academic performance.

 RethinkEd

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RethinkEd positions educators, students, and families for success.

ABOUT US

RethinkEd combines the power of technology and research to deliver innovative, scalable, and evidence-based instructional materials and supports all learners and educators, including those with disabilities. The comprehensive suite of tools ensures that every student develops the academic, behavioral, and social, life, transition, and vocational skills needed to succeed in school, at work, and in life!

GET IN TOUCH

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REFERENCES:

<https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

[Universal Access Through Inclusive Instructional Design: International Perspectives on UDL](#)
[Building Inclusive Education in K-12 Classrooms and Higher Education: Theories and Principles](#)
[Developing Inclusive Environments in Education: Global Practices and Curricula](#)