What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal design for learning is a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that
(a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
(b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.
(U.S., Higher Education Opportunity Act)

UDL in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

SEC. 2221(b)(1). COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION
“The term ‘comprehensive literacy instruction’ means instruction that—‘includes developmentally appropriate, contextually explicit, and systematic instruction, and frequent practice, in reading and writing across content areas; and incorporates the principles of universal design for learning.’”
Multiple and Flexible: Using UDL to Guide Literacy & Communication Instruction for Students with Significant Disabilities
Karen Erickson, PhD
Iowa Special Education Summer Symposium
June 12, 2018

Why Universal Design for Learning?
- Students come to the classroom with a variety of needs, skills, talents, and interests.
- The typical curriculum—which includes goals, instructional methods, classroom materials, and assessments—has many barriers and roadblocks.
- Students and teachers are expected to make all of the necessary adjustments.
- UDL places the burden to adapt on the curriculum itself.

Principles of UDL

Provide multiple, flexible means of:
- (re)Presentation
- Expression
- Engagement

Universal Design for Learning and Learning Networks

Recognition Network
Strategic Network
Affective Network

What?
How?
Why?

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
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UDL and the Learning Brain

Recognition networks: “the what of learning”
identify and interpret patterns of sound, light, taste, smell, and touch

UDL, the Learning Brain, and the Strategic Network

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

UDL, the Learning Brain, and the Affective Networks

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

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
How does UDL relate to literacy for students with low incidence disabilities?

Multiple and Flexible Means of (re)Presentation

- Digital text and print resources
  - Focus of a great deal of attention
    - National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards
    - Bookshare
  - Necessary but insufficient support
    - 53% of struggling 3rd - 9th can’t understand the text even when others read it to them
  - Picture-supported text

Picture Symbols and Text

Symbols appear to make text more universally accessible, but do they really?

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Making Text Universally Accessible Requires Making it EASIER!
- Determine the listening comprehension level of the student.
- Text must be targeted at that level.
- For students with significant disabilities, that means text must be EASY!

DLM ELA Claim 1: Students with comprehend text in increasingly complex away

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds

This is a common example of simplified, picture-supported text.
How does DLM address text complexity?

Addresses several factors that contribute to the quantitative and qualitative complexity of texts:

- **Word level complexity**: Word frequency, complexity, length in syllables
- **Sentence level complexity**: Negation words, passive voice, pronouns, figurative language
- **DLM only uses complex sentences and figurative language when required to address a particular Essential Element**
- **Paragraph level complexity**: Features of paragraphs increase in difficulty across the grades including:
  - Number of sentences
  - Number of sentence types (syntax), but conditional sentences are always avoided

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/familiar-texts-ye

http://tarheelreader.org

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Teaching Text Comprehension

Anchor-Read-Apply

GOAL: Teach students to read text in increasingly complex ways
• Primary purposes are to assist students in:
  • understanding that reading involves thinking and meaning-making
  • becoming more strategic in their own reading
• Must use a wide variety of books and other print materials.
• Should result in students who are able to read unfamiliar texts and make meaning from them.

Reading Comprehension Instructional Principles

Anchor
Read
Apply

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Activate or Build Background Knowledge
• Emphasize the thinking that is required
• Background knowledge is not always focused on content

Set a Purpose for Reading
• Purposes can and should link to grade level Essential Elements
• Not all purposes apply to every text
• Every text can be read for multiple purposes

Quick task to check in on students’ success with the purpose
• Plan the Apply task to match the purpose
• Complete the task as a group
• Return to the text AFTER completing the task to check
• Confirm that we were successful with the task
• Find the part(s) of the text the show us where we were not successful
Most students do know about first and next.
PURPOSE: Read the book so that you can decide what comes first and next when you get ready for school.

What does the book say you do first and next when you get ready for school?

Pack a backpack.
Put on clothes.
Brush your teeth.

Using the DLM Familiar Texts

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/familiar-texts-ye

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Multiple and Flexible Means of Expression

Tools for Communication
- Core vocabulary in DLM

Flexible Writing tools
- Talking word processors
- Word prediction
- Alternate Pencils

Clarity regarding the purpose of expression
Multiple means of expression – not unitary

Core Vocabulary and Communication

What is a core vocabulary?
A relatively small set of highly useful words that apply across contexts.

Approximately 85% of spoken English is comprised of 250 – 350 words

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Characteristics of a Core Vocabulary

- Limited set of highly useful words
- Words apply across settings
- Words are useful across purposes
- Variety of word classes included: primarily of pronouns, verbs, descriptors, and prepositions
- Vocabulary can be combined to increase semantic and syntactic complexity

Project Core

http://project-core.com

Universal Core Vocabulary

36 words
Meaningful as single words
Can be combined meaningfully
Useful across environments, activities, and interactions

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Available in Multiple Formats
- 36 location
- Individual use
- Classroom use
- 9 location X 4 pages
- 4 location x 9 pages
- 4 square (direct select)
- 4 in-line (partner-assisted scanning)
- 4 square (eye-gaze)
- High contrast versions for all

 PCS

 like want

 Symbol Stix

 like want

 PCS High Contrast

 like want

 Widgit Symbols

 like want

 3D Symbols

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3D Symbols (cont.)

Start with GO, LIKE, NOT when the student is:
• going to move (GO)
• expressing pleasure (LIKE)
• expressing refusal or displeasure (NOT)

Multiple and Flexible Approaches to Communication Instruction

Attribute meaning to expressive behaviors.
Ensure AAC systems are available, at all times.
Encourage communication, without requiring it.
Provide sufficient time for students to respond.
Model, model, model.
• Hold your point.
• Repeat and expand on student attempts using more conventional forms.
Provide worthwhile topic/context to communicate about!

Change in Average Communication Level as Measured by the Communication Matrix

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Whole School Performance on State Mandated End of Grade Test in Reading

Supporting Writing for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

A UDL Approach that Focuses on Written Composition

Writing Sequence
Select a topic
Communicate about the topic using available communication systems/supports
Write about the topic using the alphabet
Share finished product with others

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Writing Instruction Sequence

Select a topic
Communicate about the topic using available communication systems/supports
Write about the topic using the alphabet
Share finished product with others

Engaging All Three Learning Networks

Recognition Network
What?

Strategic Network
How?

Affective Network
Why?

Principles of UDL (again)

Provide multiple, flexible means of:
- (re)Presentation
- Expression
- Engagement

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Our goal is not to MAKE students do what we want. It is to make them WANT to do it!

Traditional approaches focus on making students do what we want. UDL approaches aim to make them want to do it.

Engagement is about recruiting and sustaining interest in learning.

Shared Reading

Teaching students to take control and make meaning while reading with an adult.

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Follow the C-A-R
Language is the key, WashingtonLearningSystems.org

An approach to structuring shared reading interactions.

COMMENT.
STOP and wait 10-15 seconds.
ASK for or invite participation,
STOP and wait 10-15 seconds.
RESPOND by repeating and adding more.

Contrasting Cases: Universal Design for Learning in Early Childhood Education and Low Incidence Disabilities

Why Does UDL Work in Early Childhood Classrooms?
➢ Early childhood education has a long history of providing instruction that is consistent with the principles of UDL (mostly without technology)
  ∘ Multiple & Flexible Means of
    ∘ Presentation
    ∘ Expression
    ∘ Engagement & Participation

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Example: Reggio Emilia

Children must:

• have some control over their learning;
• learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing;
• have relationships with others and materials in the world that is based on and supports exploration
• have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Reggio Emilia: Teachers

Teachers:

• engage in learning with the child
• actively engage with the child side-by-side rather than observing the child
• continuously collect data (photos, notes, transcribed conversations & work samples) to guide their instructional decisions

Dramatic Contrast Between UDL in Early Childhood Education and Education for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

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Limited UDL for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

With students with low incidence disabilities we:

- Increase structure
- Depend on teacher-directed instruction
- Fail to provide access to technology for learning

Singular & Stringent Views of:

(re)Presentation
- Scripted curricula
- Repetition without variety

Expression
- Consistency
- 80% on 4 of 5 days

Engagement & Participation
- Extrinsic rewards & motivators

Replacing 80% accuracy on 4 of 5 days

Must be observable and measureable
Identify the desired behavior:
- Identify letters
- Comprehend text
- Interact during shared reading
- Use alternate pencil in writing
- Select topic for writing

Write goals/objectives that target increases in the frequency of desired behaviors

http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds
Example Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify letters</th>
<th>Dave will identify each letter of the alphabet 5 or more times in a variety of contexts during a 9-week reporting period.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehend text</td>
<td>Dave will accurately complete 3 consecutive after-reading comprehension tasks across 3 different texts for 3 consecutive weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact during shared reading</td>
<td>Dave will use a range of AAC supports to comment or ask a question 3 times during each of 3 shared reading sessions in one week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Want to learn more?

http://dlmpd.com/
- 54 modules (and growing) professional development modules in ELA, Math, Science, and topics specific to DLM

http://project-core.com/
- 14 modules (and growing) professional development modules on beginning communication intervention and emergent literacy instruction for students with low incidence disabilities who are beginning communicators

Contact Information

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