ENGAGEMENT: Universal Design for Learning Principle

Universal Design for Learning (or UDL) is a way to "improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn" (CAST, 2015). UDL considers the why, what and how of students' learning.

One way to integrate universal design principles into your classroom is to provide learners with multiple means of **ENGAGEMENT**. This particular UDL approach offers diverse ways for learners to be involved with course content, their peers, and the instructor. By building in different engagement opportunities, you can help learners see the relevance of disciplinary knowledge in their academic, professional and personal lives.

TEACHING STRATEGIES
From the National Center on UDL, 2014

Multiple means of engagement can help different groups of learners in different ways without watering down learning outcomes. Not every strategy will work in every classroom, or for every subject area—find the ones that you are comfortable with and that work for your discipline and learners.

1. Build in opportunities for learners to provide their input on how classroom tasks are designed.	• Ask for periodic, informal feedback on whether students see class activities as relating to their attainment of course outcomes. • Provide students with opportunities to research, understand, and teach their peers about course concepts and topics. • Let students decide whether certain tasks (i.e., discussions) will occur online or face-to-face.
2. Include variety in classroom activities to integrate learners' different experiences, identities, backgrounds and cultures.	• In example scenarios or problems, use a variety of names, settings, or cultural references. • Invite students to share their experiences, but don't ask a student to "represent" a group. • Ground classroom activities in a variety of social, professional or cultural contexts beyond the classroom.
3. Build activities that ask learners to engage with a "real" audience and have a clear real-world purpose.	• Use experiential learning strategies to highlight the relevance of course content. • Ask students to identify the potential real-world audiences or applications they see in their work. • Share examples of past students' coursework and how it met learning outcomes while being authentic to real-life situations.
4. Divide long-term course or assignment goals into smaller short-term objectives.	• Break final projects into stages that students can develop and receive feedback on throughout the course. • Link existing tasks into an overarching task to help students see content connections. • Ask students to break an assignment into manageable parts with a timeline for completion.

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5. Require learners to reframe course objectives into their own personal learning outcomes.	• Begin the course by prompting learners to align course outcomes with their own goals. • Connect course outcomes to specific tasks and have students share how well they met these outcomes at the conclusion of these tasks. • Wrap up the course by asking students to reflect (in writing, in discussion, or video) on how the outcomes impacted their personal learning.
6. Construct linked tasks with varying degrees of difficulty that require learners to work toward similar course goals or outcomes.	• Build small (e.g. activities) and large (e.g. papers, exams) tasks that address course outcomes. • Vary activities—easy to difficult, difficult to easy, or a variety of challenges–within a course session / time period. • Use constructive alignment to link all learning activities to course outcomes.
7. Give learners feedback frequently and in a timely manner.	• Provide feedback using rubrics - this may expedite assessment while clearly indicating students' progress. • Stagger an assignment's due dates if possible to reduce feedback load. • Pair students to provide formative peer feedback based on a rubric or task guidelines.
8. Give learners resources to help them cope with "subject phobias."	• Share support tools, such as department/campus tutoring or coaching, writing center, library help, and online resources. • Emphasize a growth mindset, replacing "I'm not good at X" with "I'm still learning about X." • Share concrete, discipline-specific examples of how past students have coped with challenging learning situations or experiences.

Other UDL practices that are especially helpful to learner groups often challenged by traditional classroom styles.	auditory impaired	students with anxiety	cognitively impaired	English language learners	extroverts	introverts	international students	non-traditional students	under-achieving students	non-proficient readers	visually impaired	working students
1. Create text-based resources that learners can vary the size of text.											✓	
2. Provide text or spoken equivalents of images, graphics, videos, or animation.			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
3. Use visual (read: non-language based) resources to clarify vocabulary terms.	✓			✓			✓			✓		
4. Use a variety of familiar contexts to ground new concepts, or ask learners to situate key ideas in their own contexts.				✓			✓	✓				✓
5. Highlight to learners the connections between any information provided as a text and the accompanying representation (e.g. image, video, diagram)	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	