

UDL: Access for Diverse Learners

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Essential Question(s)

- What is Universal Design for Learning?
- How can I apply the principles of UDL in the online environment?

Summary

This session focuses on the basics and best practices of universal design for learning in the online environment to help students access materials and participate. This session explores what universal design for learning is and why UDL practices should be used when planning and designing lessons and activities. UDL can help empower all students in the classroom while breaking down barriers. This session will focus on the key principles of UDL and provides a few best practices to get participants started in creating accessible online materials.

Learning Goals

- Identify key factors of Universal Design for Learning in the online environment.
- Apply this understanding of UDL to a chosen classroom activity.

Attachments

- Presentation Slides—UDL Access for Diverse Learners.pptx
- UDL Framework Infographic—UDL Access for Diverse Learners.pdf
- Universal Design Checklist—UDL Access for Diverse Learners.docx
- Universal Design Checklist—UDL Access for Diverse Learners.pdf

Materials

- Computers with Internet access
- Google Suite or Office Suite access
- Presentation Slides (attached)
- UDL Framework infographic (linked and attached; one per participant)
- Universal Design Checklist (attached; one per participant)
- Barriers Google Slides (attached, make a copy and share link with participants)

12 minutes

Engage

Display **slide 2**. Welcome participants and briefly introduce yourself and the professional development session.

Display **slide 3**. Briefly share the objectives for the session. This provides a road map of where you will go together during the session and lets participants know what to expect from the session.

Display **slide 4**. Ask participants to think about the idea of barriers and access and how it might apply to the classroom as they watch Dad Reinvents Playgrounds to be Accessible for All

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Y3H3BxvDkCM

After the video, explain to participants that there are often barriers in our education system and classrooms that prevent our students from accessing the learning and material we attempt to teach. Participants should keep these barriers in mind as they participate in the following activity.

Delivery Methods

The following activity is called Barriers and Keys. Options below are included for the activity to be conducted in person in small groups, virtually, or in a whole group in person or hybrid.

- **Option 1:** Put participants into small groups and give each group a large piece of paper. Instruct participants to list any barriers they can think of on the paper and have groups share out after discussion/writing time.
- **Option 2:** Share the Barriers Google Slides link with participants and instruct them to follow the directions to type out and post their barriers/responses to the slide. Debrief and share out after.
- **Option 3:** Pull up the Barriers Google Slide (**slide 5** in attached Presentation Slides) on a big screen and use it as a note catcher for large group share out/discussion.

After discussion of the responses to the activity with participants, share with them that there are obvious barriers to education for our students (**slide 6**). Some of those barriers are things that we as educators cannot control. But some of them are things that, like the playground creators, we can change if we reimagine the way our classrooms and our lessons are designed. Tell participants, “Universal Design for Learning—UDL—is about knocking down the bricks—the barriers—so that learning is accessible for all of the students in our classrooms.”

15 minutes

Explore

Delivery Methods

- **Option 1:** Whole group activity: You will need to share Slides 7–10 with participants in order to elicit responses in a discussion format.
- **Option 2:** Complete this activity in small groups and have teams share out what they noticed about responses in a debrief.

Display **slide 7** in attached Presentation Slides. After reading the directions on the slide, instruct participants to think about the barriers and keys for each image they will be viewing. Tell them to either discuss in a small group or to share out, depending on which option you have chosen for this section.

For each of the slides from 8–10, take time to discuss the barriers and keys participants notice in each image. If possible, track these barriers and keys for each image on a large piece of paper.

Display **slide 8**.

Possible Barriers:

- notes presented only verbally?
- no other ways to take notes other than on handout
- not all students can see the board/notes/presentation

Possible Keys:

- graphic organizers
- chart on the wall
- teacher in the back of the room
- students grouped together
- choice of annotation

Display **slide 9**.

Possible Barriers:

- small/hard to see
- do students know what everything means?

Possible Keys:

- format for student expectations

Display **slide 10**.

Possible Barriers:

- students need to know the routine/be taught the routine for this
- format may be confusing

Possible Keys:

- stations provide various opportunities to learn in different ways
- extension activity options; would have clear directions
- translation options
- directions in multiple formats

30 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 11** to provide the definition of UDL.

Next, hand out the **UDL Framework** infographic to participants and show **slide 12**. Review the framework with participants.

Presenter's Note

Slides 13–29 provide information for Tier 1, 2, and 3 strategies for UDL. It is at this point that participants will need access to their computers, Internet, and Google Suite or Microsoft Office Suite. For each tier, provide time for participants to try the strategies provided as you walk through the how-to.

Follow directions in **slides 13–29**, walking participants through each set of strategies. Consider modeling the how-to for participants on the screen. Provide ample time for participants to practice using the strategies specific to Google/Office suites.

10 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 30** and hand out the **Universal Design Checklist** to participants. Review the checklist with participants. Ask participants to reflect on one of the classroom activities discussed earlier and use the checklist to guide how they might make changes to the activity.

Delivery Methods

Option 1: Do the activity as a whole group with all three classroom examples.

Option 2: Place participants into small groups and ask them to return to the three classroom examples (or provide these electronically for participants to view). Ask participants to use the **Universal Design Checklist** and the earlier discussion on barriers and keys to improve the classroom activity, making it more universally accessible for all learners. Provide ample time for participants to complete the activity. Ask groups to share out their responses and debrief.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 31**. Ask participants to individually reflect on where they fall in the zones of comfort.

Are you in the comfort zone? You feel extremely good about implementing various kinds of strategies for your students.

Are you in the learning zone? It's a little uncomfortable—it's going to take some focused effort to make some changes.

Or are you feeling a little panicked? If you are in the panic zone, you might be feeling overwhelmed right now and not able to implement anything.

Think about what is causing your level of discomfort. Are there any barriers to your discomfort that could be removed or changed?"

Remind participants not to feel bad if they aren't able to overhaul everything. These are stressful times so they need to give themselves some grace as they are learning to integrate UDL.

Display **slide 32**. Ask participants to participate in the Barriers and Keys activity from the beginning.

Delivery Methods

Option 1: Put participants into small groups and give each group a large piece of paper. Instruct participants to list any keys they can think of on the paper and have groups share out after discussion/writing time.

Option 2: Share the Barriers Google Slides link with participants and instruct them to follow the directions to type out and post their keys/responses to the slide. Debrief and share out after.

Option 3: Pull up the Keys Google Slide (**slide 32** in attached Presentation Slides) on a big screen and use it as a note catcher for large group share-out/discussion.

Resources

- CAST. (2018). UDL guidelines, Version 2.2 [Graphic organizer]. http://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/downloads
- DeMichele, S. (n.d.). Virtual station rotation. SlidesMania. https://slidesmania.com/virtual-station-rotations-template-created-by-stephanie-demichele/
- Freethink. (2020, September 22). Dad Reinvents Playgrounds to be Accessible for All [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3H3BxvDkCM&feature=youtu.be
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Chalk talk. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/197
- Iowa State University. (2019, September 12). Universal design checklist for your online course. Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. https://www.celt.iastate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/UDL-QM-accessibilitychecklist.pdf
- Utah State University. (1999). Contrast checker. Center for Persons with Disabilities. https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/