
Universal Design for Learning



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Teaching Assistant Orientation 2023
Syracuse University

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe what the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework is and why it is important.
2. Identify the (3) principles of the UDL framework.
3. Apply the UDL framework in the context of their own TA assignment.

Gabriella Wilson

(she/her/hers)

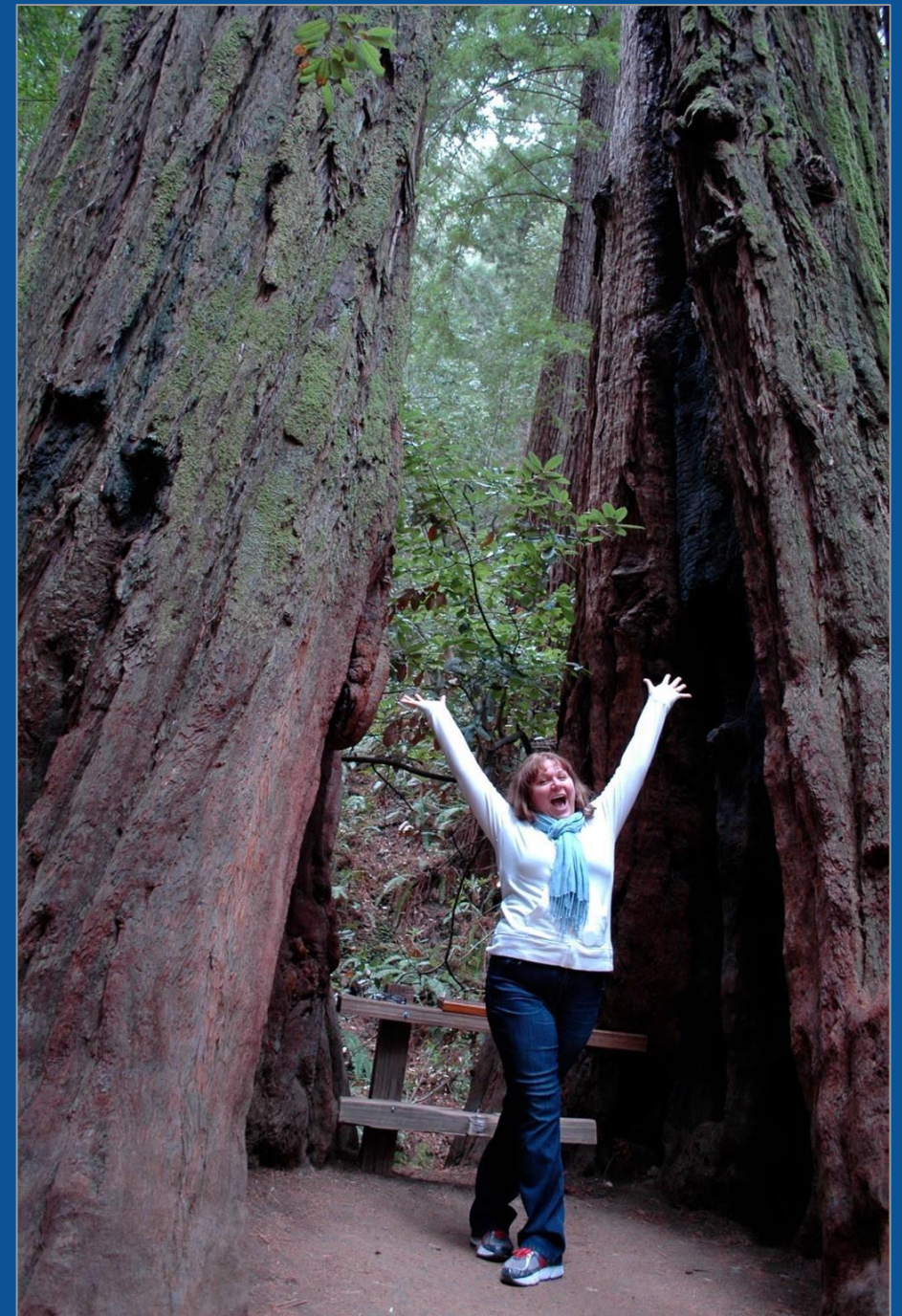
- Composition and Cultural Rhetoric – 3rd year Ph.D. studying disability and access
- I've taught in the Writing Department and the Women and Gender Studies Department
- I enjoy hiking, cooking, and fiber arts!



Amber Walton

(she/her/hers)

- 5th year Ph.D. student (Instructional Design, Development, & Evaluation)
- TA since 2018 - integrating technology into the classroom
- Enjoys gardening in my University-area home, nature hikes, music, art



Presentation Overview

- What Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is and why it is important?
- Brief history and overview of UDL
- Disability, Accommodations, and Access Needs
- The three principles of UDL
- How to apply the UDL framework in the context of your TA assignments

Introduction to Universal Design for Learning

What is Universal Design (UD)?

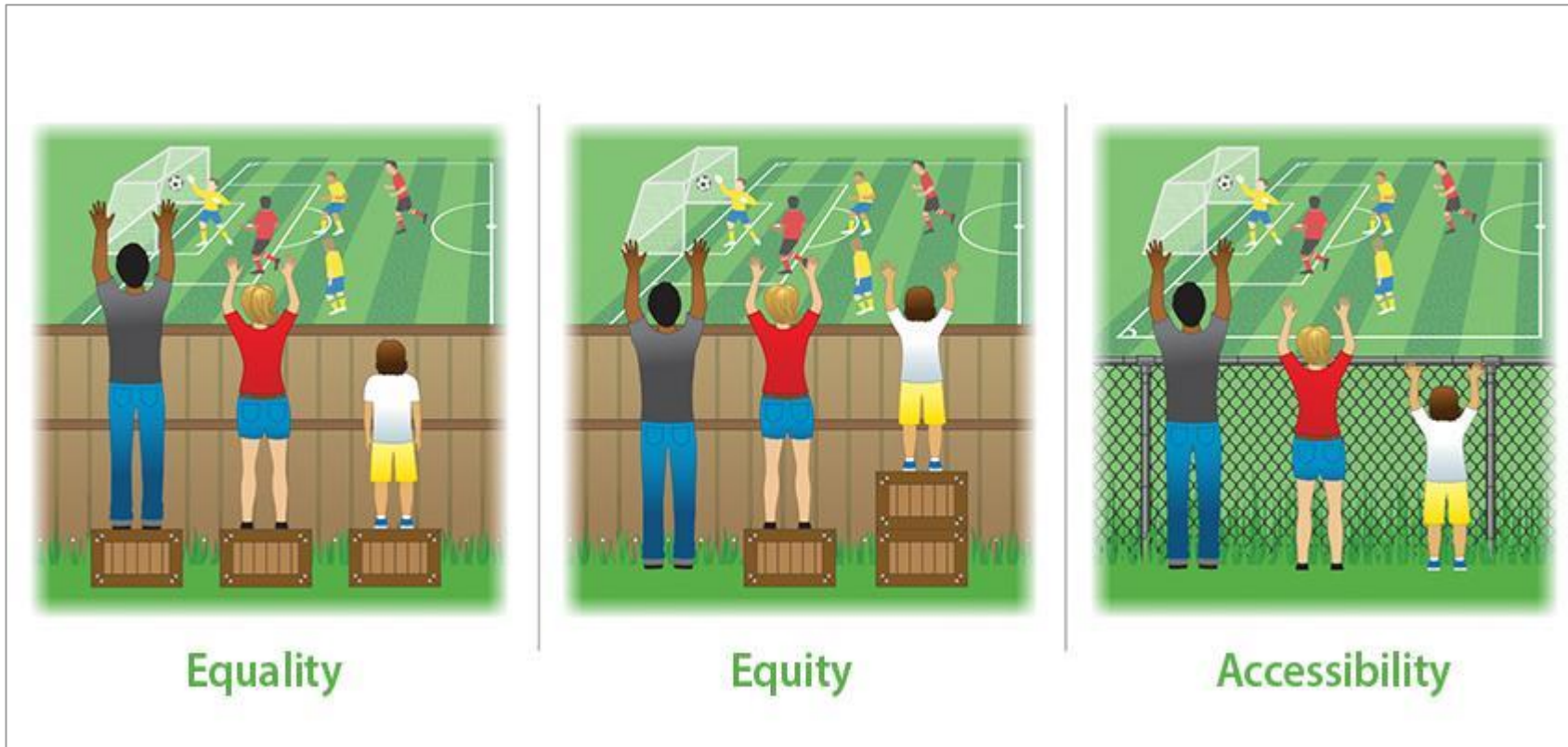
- Architect Ronald Mace (~1985)
- ADA (1990), legislation ([Rocky Mountain ADA, 2020](#))
- Principles of UD (1997)
- Design of materials, products, and environments to be used by the greatest number of people without the need to adapt or change them (The Center for Universal Design, 1997)
- For example, the image on this slide depicts a ramp into Huntington Hall. Ramps allow flexibility for anyone to use.



Ramp into Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY.

Image from: <https://docplayer.net/docs-images/84/89947968/images/8-0.jpg>

What is Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?



The application of UD principles to education to proactively design curriculum and classroom practices so the greatest number of students can benefit without the need for adaptations or changes

Brillante, P. (2017). *The essentials: Supporting young children with disabilities in the classroom*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

'Equality-Equity-Accessibility'

Image from: <https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Equality-vs-Equity-vs-Accessability.jpg>

Why is Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Important?

- diverse students
- student investment
- useful pedagogy
- remove (some) barriers to learning in the classroom environment

Remember to allow more time for UDL

Content credit: Dustin Satterfield and Phillandra Smith, 2021

Pam Brillante's book: Brillante, P. (2020). The essentials: Supporting young children with disabilities in the classroom. National Association for the Education of Young Children.



https://dailyorange.com/resize/300/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/110215_P_A1dominant_ChaseGuttman_APE.jpg

UDL is not a “checklist of things to do,” rather, a method that requires flexibility and adaptation.

Behling. In [an interview with Inside Higher Ed](#), Tom explains,

“UDL is really just 'plus-one' thinking. For every interaction that learners have now -- with the materials, yes, but also with each other, with instructors and with the wider world -- provide one more way for that interaction to happen. The 'plus-one' approach helps to take what otherwise might look like an insurmountable amount of effort and break it down into manageable, approachable chunks. It also helps people to determine where to start applying the UDL framework so they can address current challenges and pain points in their interactions.”

Disability & Accommodations

Disability can include a broad range of experiences, including short and/or long-term physical, functional, mental, or emotional disabilities, sensory processing disorders, trauma, chronic illness and pain, and neurodivergence.

Accommodations are formal requests made through CDR that ask for specific changes/revisions to the course based on a student's access needs. Instructors will receive a formal letter they will be asked to sign when students in their courses have formal accommodations.



Syracuse University

Center for Disability Resources

DATE: February 08, 2023

TO: Professor/Instructor/Professional Staff

FROM: Center for Disability Resources: Access Specialist (CDRspecialist@syr.edu)

RE: Academic Adjustments & Auxiliary Aids for XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, SUID#: 000000000, Student Email: xxxxxxxx@syr.edu

The above named student has provided documentation of a disability to the Center for Disability Resources. I have worked with this student to identify specific academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids necessary for equal access to your class and course content. In order to instruct and evaluate this student without penalty due to the disability, the following academic adjustments and auxiliary aids have been approved:

Testing Modifications/Extended Time for Tests/Exams/Quizzes - 2X

For Semester: Spring 2023

Course Modifications and Auxiliary Aids/Advance Access to PowerPoints - Timing To Be Determined Between Student and Instructor

For Semester: Spring 2023

Testing Modifications/Alternative Testing Location

For Semester: Spring 2023

Testing Modifications/Use of Microsoft Word Microsoft Word is used to type essay based exams and short responses.

For Semester: Spring 2023

Note Taking Assistance-Use of a Laptop and/or Recording Device In Class

For Semester: Spring 2023

* CDR Exam Administration Referral Information:

- Descriptions of academic adjustments (accommodations) can be found at: <http://disabilityresources.syr.edu/facultystaff/accommodationcodes/>

- Details regarding exam services can be found at: <http://disabilityresources.syr.edu/facultystaff/examsnotes/>

- General information regarding CDR resources can be found at: <http://disabilityresources.syr.edu/about/resources/>

- Academic adjustments and auxiliary aids approved here may not be appropriate/applicable for internships, practicums, clinical placements and/or third party standardized examinations.

804 University Avenue 3rd Floor Syracuse, New York 13244-2330

T 315.443.4498 F 315.443.1312 disabilityresources@syr.edu

Your Signature

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Signed On

February 08, 2023, 4:33 pm

an example
Accommodation Letter
from CDR

Accommodations & Access Needs

Accommodations are formal requests made through CDR that ask for specific changes/revisions to the course based on a student's access needs. Instructors will receive a formal letter they will be asked to sign when students in their courses have formal accommodations.

Access needs: anything a person requires to participate in their environment or a community or to engage with an idea, function, or activity.

UDL attempts to address access needs rather than individual accommodations

Access Survey Template

<https://forms.gle/uVKRFT5x4MtAK28X6>



Access Survey

Please fill out the following survey

Name *

Short answer text

Preferred First Name - What should we call you in class? *

Short answer text

What are your pronouns? If the pronouns that you share with me are different than the ones you'd like me to use during class, please mention this in the space below. *

Short answer text

The 3 Principles of Universal Design for Learning

The 3 Principles of Universal Design

Provide multiple means of...

Engagement

The “WHY” of learning

- Making the course content more interesting and relevant to the students.
- Goal: Develop expert learners who are purposeful and motivated.

Representation

The “WHAT” of learning

- The way information is presented to students.
- Goal: Develop expert learners who are resourceful and knowledgeable.

Action & Expression

The “HOW” of learning

- How students demonstrate their skills and knowledge.
- Goal: To allow all students to express what they know.

Engagement Guidelines (The “WHY” of learning)

Provide options for...

Recruiting interest

- Increase individual choice and autonomy
- Relate content to students’ lives
- Minimize threats and distractions

Sustaining Interest and Persistence

- Clearly define goals and objectives
- Vary levels of challenge and support
- Foster collaboration and community
- Provide feedback to students

Encouraging Self-Regulation

- Facilitate appropriate goal-setting and expectations
- Facilitate the development of coping skills
- Provide opportunities for self-assessment and reflection

Examples of the Principle of Engagement

Guideline:

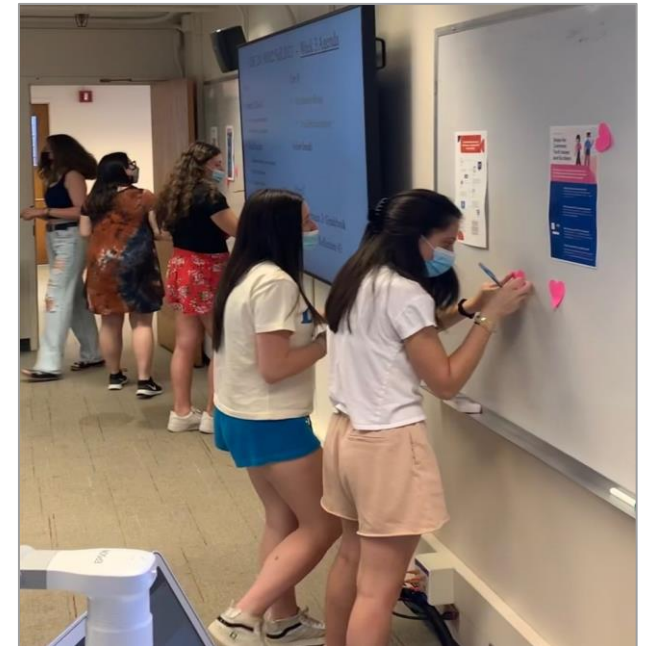
Recruiting Interest

- Allow students to choose their own topic for final project
- Challenges:
 - Have to approve everyone's topic
 - Less uniform when grading
 - I might not be an expert on all of the topics
- Ways of meeting challenges:
 - Consider how students demonstrate they have learned a concept rather than how well they address a particular prompt
 - Ask students to self-assess their work and write a reflection that evaluates their writing—use that evaluation when providing feedback

Guideline:

Sustaining Interest and Persistence

- Infographic gallery tour with specific peer feedback
- Challenges:
 - Physical barriers in classroom space
- Ways of meeting challenges
 - Digitizing documents & posting to discussion board for online peer feedback



Students write peer feedback on heart-shaped sticky notes.
Image credit A.Walton 2021 18

Representation Guidelines (The “WHAT” of learning)

Provide options for...

Perception

- Offer ways of customizing the display of information
- Present information in different formats (visual, auditory, etc.)

Language and Symbols

- Clarify vocabulary, symbols, syntax, and structure
- Support decoding of text and mathematical notation, and symbols
- Promote understanding across languages
- Illustrate through multiple media

Comprehension

- Provide background knowledge or activate students' memory of background knowledge
- Highlight patterns, big ideas and relationships
- Guide students' processing of information

Examples of the Representation Principle

Guideline:

Perception

- Instructor's notes with "script" that I will follow during lesson; provide ahead of time as an alternative/supplement to spoken information
- Challenges:
 - Takes a lot of time to plan a script and it is easy to deviate from the script
- Ways of meeting challenges:
 - Live captioning, writing on chalkboard what you/other learners are verbalizing
 - Providing agendas with loose notes
 - Asking different students each class to take notes as an assignment
 - Asking students to generate notes as a class

Guideline:

Comprehension

- Walk students through difficult graphs, concepts, or quotes; show students how to decipher, and admit that it is challenging
- Challenges:
 - Takes a lot of cognitive effort to explain thought processes
- Ways of meeting challenges:
 - Model for students how to break down and clarify an example of a complex quote then ask them to break down another quote in groups and review as a class
 - Ask different sections of the room to decipher each element of a graph and then review the graph as a class
 - Include a video explanation of complex theories or concepts
 - Build in comprehension checkpoints- ask students to complete exit tickets to understand what concepts they need more help with

Action and Expression Guidelines (The “HOW” of learning)

Provide options for...

Physical Action

- Vary the methods for response and navigation
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

Expression and Communication

- Use multiple media (text, speech, drawing, etc.) for communication
- Encourage the use of multiple tools and modalities for expressing student knowledge

Executive Functions

- Guide appropriate goal-setting
- Support planning and strategy development
- Facilitate management of information and resources
- Enhance students' ability to monitor their progress

Examples of the Action and Expression Principle

Guideline:

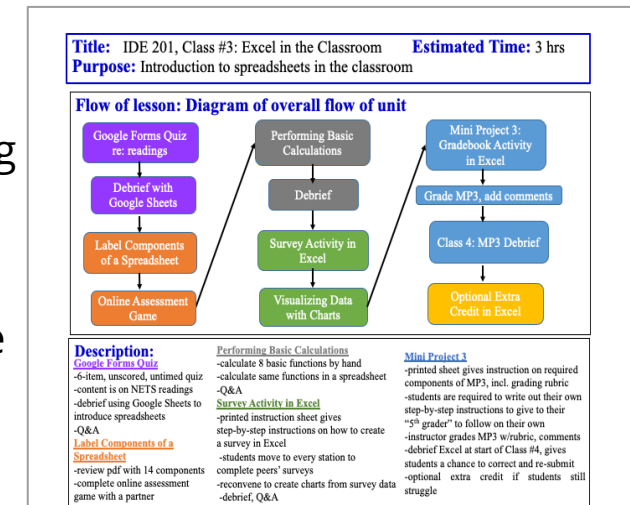
Expression and Communication

- Incorporate multiple modes of communication and conveying information
- Challenges:
 - It takes time to incorporate multiple modes of communication
- Ways of meeting challenges:
 - Provide multiple links to content (Inform students of homework through the course calendar, Blackboard announcements, and on an agenda)
 - Try to incorporate one visual element into your lesson every other week (Youtube and Ted Talks offer great resources for condensing complex theories)

Guideline:

Executive Functions

- Advance organizer - Powerpoint “storyboard” organizing each stage of the final group project in detail
- Challenges:
 - Group collaboration & organization can be frustrating
- Ways of meeting challenges:
 - Posting a Powerpoint template teams can follow
 - Posting an example
 - Reviewing the grading rubric



Additional Resources

Center for Disability Resources (CDR)

- **Mission:** to engage the University Community to empower students, enhance equity and provide a platform for innovation and inclusion, embracing the concept of **disability as diversity**
- Provides:
 - individual accommodations [via Orange SUccess]
 - assistive technology (ie, screen readers)
- Available to ALL students



A banner that reads "Be Kind" in American Sign Language in the hallway of the Center for Disability Resources. Photo by Marilyn Hesler.
Image from <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2020/10/06/center-for-disability-resources-empowers-students-changing-perceptions/>

Additional Resources

Resource	Link/Citation	Resource	Link/Citation
Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)	https://udlguidelines.cast.org/	Center for Disability Resources	https://disabilityresources.syr.edu/
Blogposts by CAST Members	https://www.understood.org/en/articles/understanding-universal-design-for-learning	Disability Cultural Center	https://www.syracuse.edu/life/accessibility-diversity/disability-cultural-center/
Dive into UDL Website	https://www.diveintoudl.com/	UDL NOW! A Teacher's Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms.	<u>Novak, K. (2016). UDL NOW! A Teacher's Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms. CAST Professional Publishing.</u>
Quality Online Teaching Links and Resources Database	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jCYQ28DcomIEwvOFHTnwRxftquBO2ctzYx5h1JqCz4M/edit?usp=sharing	IRIS Center - Vanderbilt University: Understanding Accommodations	https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/micro-credential/micro-accommodations/p01/
UDL Handout w/graphics & definitions	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3sNNuyR7QLUOTFP6_E4oPx5s21z6RDcwIWWP3igSEk/edit?usp=sharing	Crippling Pandemic Learning in Higher Education Collaborative Resource	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IUwosp1co9dacdXoiwtQtSRMS7znSqSP2k2qo80msKs/edit?usp=sharing

Transfer of Learning

Reflection Activity

Instructions: Brainstorm some ideas to answer the questions on the right of the slide.

1. If I had to identify one UDL guideline that I can incorporate into my TA assignment, how would I incorporate it?
2. What are some barriers to incorporating this guideline into my TA assignment?
3. How might I overcome these barriers?

Think-Pair-Share

Instructions:

1. **Think** about your brainstorming notes
2. **Pair** with partner(s)
3. Discuss findings
4. **Share** themes with large group

You can use the QR code to the right to jot down any notes from your think-pair-share to bring back to the group -----

- Identify one UDL guideline that you can envision incorporating into your TA assignment. How would you incorporate it?
- What are some barriers to incorporating this guideline into your TA assignment?
- How might you overcome these barriers?



Please following the QR Code to the right to
create a WordCloud ----->



What do you think of when you hear
the word “ACCESS”

Questions?

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