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# **Universal Design for Learning**

## **(UDL)**



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# Overview

- Concepts, rationale and theories
- UDL in the classroom
- UDL in distance education



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# Concepts, rationale and theories

- What is UDL?
- UDL opportunities and challenges
- Theories behind UDL



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# What is UDL?

An approach to teaching and learning that:

- emphasizes flexibility and accessibility for all learners
- provides multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to accommodate diverse learning needs and preferences
- promotes inclusivity and equity in education by removing barriers to learning and enabling all students to achieve their full potential



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# UDL opportunities and challenges

- UDL opportunities
- UDL challenges
- Harnessing opportunities and addressing challenges



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# UDL opportunities

- Improved access to education for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs
- Enhanced student engagement and motivation
- Higher student achievement and retention rates
- Better teaching practices and learning outcomes for all students



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# UDL challenges

- Lack of awareness and understanding: applying UDL requires time, training and resources
- Limited resources and support: not always available in institutions
- Resistance to change: implementing UDL can require a shift in traditional teaching practices



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# UDL underlying theories

- Neuroscience in education: many UDL principles are aligned with neuroscientific principles
  - Cognitive load theory: learners have limited capacity to process information and learn effectively when overloaded with too much information or cognitive demands.
- Constructivist theory: learners actively construct their knowledge through interaction with their environment and peers.





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# UDL strategies in the classroom

- Provide multiple means of representation (text, images, videos, audios)
- Offer multiple means of expression (verbal, written, visual, or interactive) for students to demonstrate their learning
- Provide multiple means of engagement (individual work, group work, collaborative work)



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# UDL strategies for online learning

- Provide accessible digital content (alternative text descriptions for images, captions for videos, and audio descriptions for visual content)
- Use a variety of instructional methods (videos, interactive simulations, quizzes, discussion forums)
- Incorporate assistive technology tools (screen readers, speech-to-text software, or alternative input devices)



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# Main takeaways

- UDL involves designing learning experiences for all types of learners
- Awareness of UDL theories can help plan lessons and activities
- Adapt UDL to mode of delivery (online vs face-to-face)
- Technologies have an important role in UDL
- UDL requires resources and readiness for transformation