

ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

The Universal Design of Curriculum, Instruction, Materials, and Assessments

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Origin of Universal Design

“Consider the needs of the broadest possible range of users from the beginning”

- Architect, Ron Mace

Elements of Universal Design

- Not one size fits all – but alternatives.
- Designed from the beginning, *not added on later*.
- Increases access opportunities for everyone.

Common examples: ramps, curb cuts, electric doors, captions on television

The Challenge in Education

- Diversity is the norm in today's classrooms.
- All learners, including students with disabilities, need an education that provides access, participation, and progress in the general education curriculum.

The Solution

Universally design the curriculum and instructional objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, and assessments so that diverse learner needs can be met, instead of retrofitting for when a problem arises.

The Universal Design for Learning Approach

Diversity is the norm in today's classrooms

Applying Universal Design for Learning

(UDL) principles in education is enabled by:

- Appropriate curriculum and instructional objectives
- Flexible and supportive materials
- Flexible and diverse teaching methods, and
- Accessible and flexible assessments

UDL for Curriculum and Instructional Objectives

Goal: To provide optimal challenge for all students.

- Describe objectives in ways that students can understand them.
- Set objectives that every student can reach with appropriate tools and alternative paths to success.
- Set objectives that motivate students to learn (e.g. breakdown long-term goals into reachable objectives /benchmarks for all students).

Traditional Approach

- Student groups *create a map* containing political, topographical, and natural resource information in the selected state of study.
- Students will *orally present* and *describe* the state and map results to the class.

Note: the means for accomplishing the goals are interwoven into the instructional goal.

UDL Approach

- Students *map* the political, topographical, and natural resources of a selected state and compare patterns across the maps.
- Students will *present* results to demonstrate understandings of the state and its resources

Note: The means for attaining these objectives can be individualized.



UDL for Instructional Materials

Goal: To ensure equal access for all students.

- Provide a range of formats and media at different levels of complexity.
- Provide different materials for students to express what they know.
- Provide materials that keep students engaged.
- If possible use customizable media and materials

Traditional Approach

- Social Studies Textbook
- Encyclopedia
- Traditional map materials (e.g. poster board, markers, clay)
- CD software on US geography

UDL Approach

- Evaluate access issues for vision, decoding, etc., and use a variety of levels of printed text and digital materials.
- Provide supports and instruction to use CD/DVD resources.
- If necessary, pre-select possible materials for review/research and/or direct students to area of media center with appropriate resource materials.
- Provide a wider variety of means and materials that students can use to create a map.

Digital Text



Digital Text



UDL for Teaching Methods

Goal: To provide effective instruction for all students.

- Provide multiple examples
- Highlight critical features
- Provide multiple media and formats
- Explain background/context
- Provide positive behavioral supports

Traditional Approach

- The teacher provides a brief lecture on the home state. She reminds students of previous studies of land and resources, and the impact of natural resources on population growth, political and land use issues.
- The teacher divides the students into working groups to complete their research, map-making, note-taking, and presentation.

UDL Approach

- Avoid limiting presentation style. Consider the use of media with the presentation.
- When opening the lesson, consider frequent questions, statements of clarification, and solicit student participation.
- Consider assigning students to working groups by mixed abilities for complementary skills.
- Provide demonstrations of performance expectations.

UDL for Assessments

Goal: To accurately measure progress for all students.

- Assessments should adjust to many individual differences.
- Assessments should focus the questions on exactly what teachers, districts and States are trying to find out (e.g. knowledge, skill, or emotional development).

Traditional Approach

Administer the end-of-chapter test prepared by the textbook publisher and found in the Teacher's Guide. The test consists of multiple choice and short essay answers.

UDL Approach

- Determine if objectives measured in the published test match instructional objectives and adjust the test, if necessary.
- Evaluate the accessibility for all learners in the class. If necessary consider alternate means of delivery (e.g. oral test, un-timed session), modification of assessment content (e.g. less complex questions on less material), and/or different question format (e.g. matching columns, fill-in-blank with or without word bank).