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# Universal Design for Learning

## What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for designing teaching that provides all individuals with equal opportunities to learn. It has its roots in the “universal design movement” in architecture and product design, which calls for the design of products and environments to be usable by all people. For example, in the environment these are things like curb cuts, sidewalk ramps, closed captioning, etc. In the workplace, these are things like standing desks, desks at different heights, control buttons in large print or color coded and environmental considerations (e.g., low noise areas, climate control, or physical accessibility).



UDL takes that “universal design” concept of “usable by all people” and applies it to the teaching and learning settings. It calls for multiple approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. Implementing UDL principles save time, save money, promote inclusion and assist in avoiding legal issues.

UDL is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to remove barriers such as inflexibility, one-size-fits-all, or lessons that do not meet the needs of the learners. Grounded in research of learner differences and effective instructional settings, UDL principles call for varied and flexible ways of **1) Representation; 2) Expression; and 3) Engagement.**

- UDL Benefits:**
- ▶ People with disabilities
  - ▶ English Language Learners
  - ▶ Unidentified strugglers
  - ▶ New teachers

**UDL Principle: Representation** — Gives learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, or the “what” of learning.

### Examples:

- ▶ Offering alternatives for auditory and visual information (e.g., printed materials, videos, hands-on activities)

# Universal Design for Learning (cont'd)

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- Clarifying vocabulary and symbols
- Activating or supplying background knowledge
- Illustrating through multiple media
- Offering ways of customizing the display of information

**UDL Principle: Expression** — Provides learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know, or the “how” of learning.

## Examples:

- Varying the methods for response (written, oral, demonstration...)
- Providing access to “assistive technologies” (apps, programs...)
- Using multiple media for communication (video, audio, text...)
- Supporting planning and strategy development (goal setting, test-taking strategies, organizing thoughts...)
- Building fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

**UDL Principle: Engagement** — Taps into learners’ interests and prior knowledge, offers appropriate challenges, and increases motivation, or the “why” of learning.

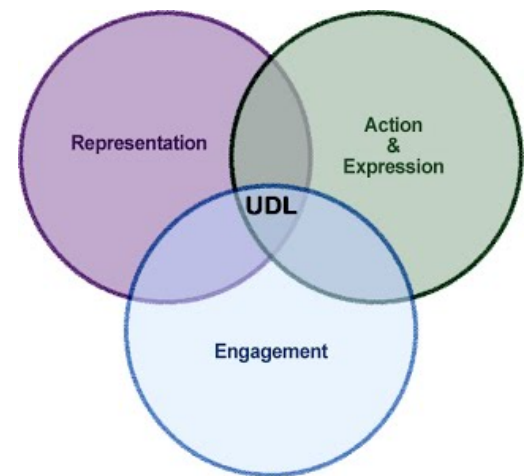
## Examples:

- Provide choices (projects, work alone, work in pairs/groups)
- Optimize relevance, value, and real-world connections
- Minimize threats and distractions
- Provide opportunities for self-reflections and self-assessment

## UDL Strategies in Training Settings or the Workplace

The principles of UDL can be used in career training settings and work experiences to more effectively and efficiently engage all students, including individuals with disabilities. By incorporating UDL into career-related activities/programs, instructors and potential employers can use evidence-based practices to support students/employees as they prepare to transition from education to the workplace.

Also by including UDL principles in the design and instruction of career training and work-based learning experiences, instructors can include the largest number of students in the greatest variety of career development opportunities from first contact—even without expertise in disability or specific knowledge of an individual’s disability and/or learning style. This can further lead to improved outcomes for all participants.



Students differ in how they:

- Perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them.
- Express what they know.
- Become engaged or motivated to learn.

UDL is one solution to addressing these differences with the purpose of removing barriers and creating access for all students.

# Universal Design for Learning (cont'd)

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## Applying UDL in Career Training and Work-based Learning Programs

### UDL Principle: Representation

#### Examples:

- Allow access to multiple versions and formats for directions and resources (i.e., oral, tape recorded, typed, written, and/or with prompts).
- Accompany key instructions with pictures or pictographs.
- Make media and internet resources accessible and customizable (allowing for font type, size, color, highlighting, and contrast to be adjusted for the user; limiting unnecessary distractions).
- Allow opportunities for clarifying questions, review, and practice.
- Provide cues and prompts about how to approach completing tasks (i.e., number list of tasks, a schedule with tasks, etc.).
- Provide information in ways that build on an individual's strengths and interests (i.e., explain how task connects to future career interests).

### UDL Principle: Expression

#### Examples:

- Have student teach a peer or mentor the material.
- Allow student to organize information in a way that makes most sense to her/him.
- Allow additional time for student to respond (i.e., asking questions before the break, lunch, or at the end of the day to allow processing time).
- Allow participant to choose her/his desired method of demonstrating and expressing knowledge (i.e., use chart to track progress, create PowerPoint /video of information).

### UDL Principle: Engagement

#### Examples:

- Teach student to develop short-term goals to help them in their process of completing a larger more complex task.
- Teach student to self-evaluate work/progress (i.e., create daily or weekly self-rating sheets).
- Provide incentives and opportunities for reinforcement.
- Have student identify connections to past experiences.
- Make performance expectations explicit.



# Center Disability Awareness Activities

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## Ramey Job Corps

In April, academic and career technical instructors joined efforts to offer several “autism awareness” activities including an “awareness card contest,” an “awareness bulletin board,” a bibliographic mural about Temple Grandin (famous person with autism), and drama presentations at the “Help Me Center” that serves children with special needs. All of the activities were captured in an “Autism Awareness Month” newsletter.



## Hawaii Job Corps

In March, the center hosted a student/staff presentation on service dogs. Along with opportunities to interact with service animal handlers and their dogs, the guest speaker, Loren Lasher of Hawaii FIDO, provided details on service animal training and qualifications. In May, the center hosted Aloha Independent Living Hawaii where the presenters (including a current client) shared information about services for individuals with disabilities and success stories.



## Burdick Job Corps

In April, the Disability Coordinators and Health and Wellness Department hosted a table/booth in the Recreation building in honor of Autism Awareness Month. The TEAP Specialist helped develop flyers, games, prizes, and giveaways for the event. Other activities to build Autism awareness included educational email blasts to all staff, and group viewings on a big screen in the conference room of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar with snacks provided.



## Ottumwa Job Corps Center

During a staff professional development day on center, the Disability Coordinator provided YouTube video clips and a PowerPoint presentation on Autism Spectrum Disorder that included possible areas of impact and associated accommodations. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, “National Autism Awareness Day,” staff and students wore blue in support of understanding and acceptance for people with autism.



# Spotlight on Assistive Technology: UDL

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## Bug Me! Sticky Notes

The [Bug Me! Sticky Notes app](#) helps students with organizational, prioritization, and memory challenges. It provides students with a free sticky post-it note tool for iOS or Android that helps them organize reminders for assignments, appointments, medication times, etc. The app allows students to set alarms and alerts to have customized colored notes pop up and remind (“bug”) them.



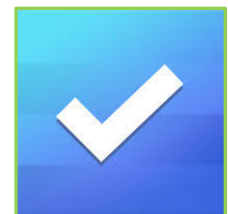
## Visual Schedule Planner

The [Visual Schedule Planner app](#) supports students with learning and/or employment-related organizational, transitional, and anxiety-related challenges by providing audio/visual supports attached to daily events. Students can personalize and customize their visual daily, weekly, monthly scheduler/planner with their own photos and sounds.



## Taskify

The [Taskify](#) mobile app helps students with organization, prioritization, and multi-tasking challenges. The app allows them to create simple “to do” lists, or manage multiple projects/checklists (e.g., classroom, personal, and work-related). Students can add notes, flag priorities, and set reminders and due dates to stay on schedule(s) and be productive.



## Idea Sketch

Idea Sketch app helps students with memory challenges and supports them with generating ideas. The app allows them to brainstorm and/or capture their ideas (for writing assignments, projects, presentations, etc.) and organize them into diagrams such as mind maps, concept maps, lists, or flow charts. Ideas can be added and copied from emails, documents, web pages, etc.



## White Noise Lite

The [White Noise Lite](#) app supports students with limitations related to noise distractions or difficulty sleeping. For students who benefit from blocking outside noises with white noise sounds (e.g., rain, campfire, heartbeat, etc.), the app can be used to reduce stress, increase relaxation, or even increase focus on tasks and assignments. Students can even record their own white noise sounds.



E-mail your comments or suggestions to:  
Johnetta Davis, National Health and Wellness Manager  
[davis.johnetta@dol.gov](mailto:davis.johnetta@dol.gov)

# Disability Resources

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## National Center on UDL

[National Center on UDL](#) is a web resource specifically designed to provide UDL as a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people. The web pages include videos, graphics, and guidelines of ways for teaching staff to design learning experiences that meet the needs of all learners. A specific graphic organizer tool provides concrete examples of the three principles of UDL: Multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

## National Center on Accessible Materials

[Accessible Education Materials](#) (AEM) include both print-based and digital learning materials and technologies that are designed or enhanced in a way that makes them usable across the widest range of learning variability regardless of format (e.g., print, digital, graphic, audio, or video). Included are answers to questions that often arise for educators about accessible materials as well as links to additional AEM Center resources.

### Upcoming Webinars

- [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Part 2](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Part 3](#)
- [Disability Coordinator \(DC\) Orientation Part 1](#)
- [Disability Coordinator \(DC\) Orientation Part 2](#)

Please check the [Event Registration](#) page (Note: Link only works inside of Citrix) on the Job Corps Community Web site for dates/times

## Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and Universal Design in the Workplace

[JAN and Universal Design in the Workplace](#) is a webpage designed to supporting training staff and employers in meeting the diverse and unique needs of students/employees with equipment that includes universal design features. The page contains tips and ideas to consider when selecting, purchasing, and evaluating universally designed equipment and adaptations. Now that computer workstations are prevalent in learning and several work-related environments, JAN also created a specific link to [Accessibly Computer Workstations: A Snapshot](#).

### Regional Disability Coordinators

- Boston: Kristen Philbrook ([philbrook.kristen@jobcorps.org](mailto:philbrook.kristen@jobcorps.org))
- Philadelphia: Lydia Kidder ([kidder.lydia@jobcorps.org](mailto:kidder.lydia@jobcorps.org))
- Atlanta and San Francisco: Stephanie Karras ([karras.stephanie@jobcorps.org](mailto:karras.stephanie@jobcorps.org))
- Dallas: Alyssa Purificacion Olivas ([purificacion.alyssa@jobcorps.org](mailto:purificacion.alyssa@jobcorps.org))
- Chicago: Sharon Hong ([hong.sharon@jobcorps.org](mailto:hong.sharon@jobcorps.org))