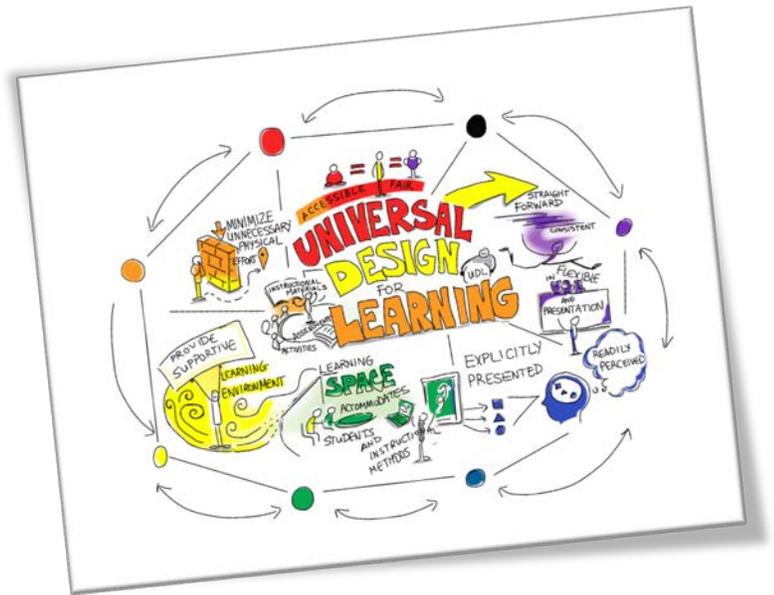


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Universal Design for Learning

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for designing curriculum 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 saves time, saves money, promotes inclusion and assists in avoiding legal issues.

UDL is an approach to 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

Universal Design for Learning (cont'd)

- 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...)
- Providing access to “assistive technologies”
- Using multiple media for communication
- Supporting planning and strategy development
- Building fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

UDL Principle: Engagement — Taps into learners’ interests, 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

Why UDL?

Everyone struggles from barriers at one time or another. UDL is about creating accessibility for all. It makes things safer, easier, and more convenient for everyone. UDL helps us “educate for diversity.”

Why is that important at Job Corps? Job Corps students have a full range of diversity, including physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities, as well as different learning, language, and work experiences. To accommodate these diverse needs and differences, UDL reduces barriers and provides students equal opportunities to learn and work. It also has potential to lessen the workload on staff, as systems, methods, and strategies are adopted that immediately meet students’ needs.



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)

UDL in Action on Job Corps Centers

Albuquerque Job Corps Center

Senior and Career Technical Education Staff at Albuquerque Job Corps Center are creating ways around learning barriers. In welding, with the help of a grant, the staff purchased a “welding simulator.” It benefits all students in the trade, as they are able to practice and repeat in a “safe” environment. Deputy Center Director, Victoria Collins, reported that the welding simulator saves time and money. “The students practice without burning rods. It is virtual welding with audio feedback, so students benefit from visual, hands-on, auditory, and frequent feedback.” This excellent example of UDL not only allows students with disabilities access to the welding trade, it also provides ways to support and challenge all students.



Senator Sander Rue observing Albuquerque JCC students using a welding simulator during the center's 50th year Open House.

Pittsburgh Job Corps Center

Culinary Instructor, Tamara Donoghue, created a “Culinary Math Class” with the purpose of providing alternate and varied ways to teach new information, to engage students by using real world examples, and to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways. In order to reach and teach all of her students, Ms. Donoghue uses different teaching strategies to include individual, peer-to-peer, small group, and full class instruction, as well as the use of games, manipulatives, a Promethean Board, and flipchart. The physical learning environment includes single word problems posted around the room to allow students to get out of their seat and focus on only one problem at a time.



Pittsburgh JCC students practicing one of their favorite math activities—learning fractions while making snacks!

Ms. Donoghue’s classes consist of several English Language Learner students and many students with a variety of learning disabilities. She reports that they all benefit from the hands on activities and the visuals in the lessons described above.

Have a UDL practice you would like to share? Contact your Regional Disability Coordinator.

Spotlight on Assistive Technology: UDL Resources (cont'd)

High Tech Tools

High tech tools utilize technology to meet the accommodation needs of JC students. In a technology-driven society, advances in technology have made high tech tools more affordable and accessible. Many people use iTunes or Google Play to download their favorite music, but through iTunes and Google Play we have access to free and low-cost educational apps that can meet the accommodation needs of our students.

Planner Plus

This free app provides a digital organizational tool for iPhone and iPad users. This app can assist our JC students with functional limitations related to organization and task management by keeping calendars, tasks, and notes in one easy to access location.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/planner-plus-daily-calendar/id571588936?mt=8>



Alarmed ~ Reminders + Timers

This free app provides a digital tool to set reminders and alarms. Perfect for JC students that have functional limitation with memory, organizations, or time management. This app is compatible with iPhone and iPad.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/alarmed-reminders-+-timers/id371886784?mt=8>



myHomework Student Planner

This app supports students with challenges in organization and memory. This app provides a tool to keep track of important assignments, due dates, and schedules.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.myhomework>



White Noise Free

This app is perfect for students with limitations related to distractibility or difficulty sleeping. This app provides white noise to eliminate background noise, enhance focus, help with sleep, and reduces stress and increases relaxation.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tmssoft.whitenoise.lite>



Audio Note Lite

This free app provides digital note taking tool for iPad and iPhone users. Recorded notes can be shared through iCloud, iTunes, and Dropbox.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audionote-lite-notepad-voice/id379301403?mt=8>



Disability Resources

The National Center on Universal Design for Learning

Supports the effective implementation of UDL by connecting stakeholders in the field and providing resources and information about implementation, community, research, and advocacy. www.udlcenter.org

Teaching Every Student

Includes a multimedia version of the book, Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning (Rose & Meyer, 2002). This website is designed for kindergarten through grade 12 teachers, but can be informative for adult education teachers. <http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent>

Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT)

Offers supports for incorporating UDL principles into the postsecondary setting and experiences of students with disabilities. <http://www.washington.edu/doit>

Upcoming Job Corps Disability Webinars	
Webinar	Dates/Times *All Times are Eastern
Reasonable Accommodation Process	April 5, 2016 @ 4 PM and April 7, 2016 @ 11 AM
Reading 200	April 27, 2016 @ 11 AM and April 28, 2016 @ 4 PM
Center Responsibilities in the Applicant File Review Process	May 4, 2016 @ 11 AM and May 5, 2016 @ 3 PM
Supporting Students with Emotional Disabilities and Behavior De-escalation Strategies	May 25, 2016 @ 11 AM and May 26, 2016 @ 4 PM

Regional Disability Coordinators by Region		
Boston, Philadelphia and San Francisco	Atlanta and Chicago	Dallas
Kristen Philbrook 301-218-4323 kristen.philbrook@humanitas.com	Sharon Hong 301-358-0190 sharon.hong@humanitas.com	Laura Kuhn 602-403-9998 laura.kuhn@humanitas.com

E-mail your comments or suggestions to:
Johnetta Davis, Acting National Health and Wellness Manager
davis.johnetta@dol.gov