SWiFT

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning—known as UDL—guides teachers to create a classroom and plan lessons that recognize how differently every student learns.

When a school uses UDL, teachers set clear goals for all students but may use different ways to help different students meet those goals.

Teachers plan their lessons to use different ways of:

1. Presenting content to students
2. Seeing what students know and can do
3. Keeping students interested and involved

Frequently Asked Questions

How does UDL help all students learn together in the same classroom?

UDL provides students of all abilities equal chances to learn. With UDL, educators design flexible and motivating lessons that draw on students' strengths to learn and show what they have learned. Students are offered many ways to access the same information. For example, a student who learns better by seeing or a student who has a hard time hearing may get extra pictures or videos. A student who has trouble seeing may get a way to hear the information rather than see it. Students also have choice about how to show what they have learned, such as writing a report, completing a project, or giving a speech.

Why UDL?

All students learn differently because each person's brain works in its own way. This means one way of learning will not work for everyone. UDL makes sure ALL students have options for learning that best meet their needs.

What does UDL mean for my child?

UDL means the teacher is planning ahead to make sure your child is able to learn grade-level content. It means that your child will get many ways to access the content and to show what they learned. When teachers use UDL, students gain skills in self-motivation as they see how their interests connect with the lesson, find and use information, and know how to set and meet goals.

What could UDL look like at my school?

When teachers use UDL, you will see students learning the same content in lots of ways. Some students listen to the audio of a book, while others underline text in a printed book, or draw pictures of the main ideas of a book. When it is time to show what each student has learned, some may write about it, some may make a speech, and some may create something on the computer. In a classroom using UDL, students know they will have the options they need to meet goals they and their teachers set.

How Can I Get Involved?

- Ask the teacher how he uses UDL in the classroom
- Ask your child to tell you what ways of learning she likes best. Have her describe how that works in her classroom.
- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher to talk about how your child learns best. Tell her what you have learned from your child and ask her to share what she has seen with your child
- Share your child's interests with the teacher.

How Do I Learn More?

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