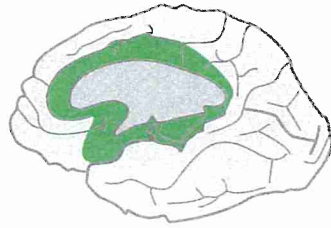# Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

Provide Multiple Means of
Engagement
*Purposeful, motivated learners*

Provide options for self-regulation
+ Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation
+ Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
+ Develop self-assessment and reflection

Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence
+ Heighten salience of goals and objectives
+ Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
+ Foster collaboration and community
+ Increase mastery-oriented feedback

Provide options for recruiting interest
+ Optimize individual choice and autonomy
+ Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
+ Minimize threats and distractions
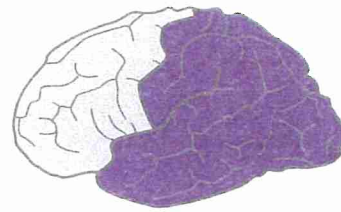
Provide Multiple Means of
Representation
Resourceful, knowledgeable learners

Provide options for comprehension
+ Activate or supply background knowledge
+ Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
+ Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation
+ Maximize transfer and generalization

Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
+ Clarify vocabulary and symbols
+ Clarify syntax and structure
+ Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols
+ Promote understanding across languages
+ Illustrate through multiple media

Provide options for perception
+ Offer ways of customizing the display of information
+ Offer alternatives for auditory information
+ Offer alternatives for visual information
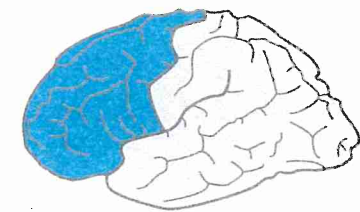
Provide Multiple Means of
Action & Expression
Strategic, goal-directed learners

Provide options for executive functions
+ Guide appropriate goal-setting
+ Support planning and strategy development
+ Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

Provide options for expression and communication
+ Use multiple media for communication
+ Use multiple tools for construction and composition
+ Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

Provide options for physical action
+ Vary the methods for response and navigation
+ Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

UDL Intersections

Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction

Frequent questions about the commonalities between "Differentiated Instruction" and "Universal Design for Learning" have prompted the examination of these two frameworks. The purpose of this brief is to describe the differences and highlight the intersections between them.

What is Differentiated Instruction?

Differentiated Instruction (DI) has at its core the goal of making learning accessible for all students. DI recognizes that learners differ in terms of interests, readiness, and learner profile (including factors such as culture, gender, and environmental preferences). In order to address these differences, teachers need to make instructional decisions based on formal and informal data related to the specific students in a classroom. Teachers can then select from a range of strategies to differentiate content, processes, products, or the learning environment in order to help each student acquire essential concepts, principles, and skills.

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is based on the evidence from neuroscience that no two brains learn in the same way; learner variability is the rule. The UDL Guidelines (see the National Center on UDL: http://www.udlcenter.org/) provide a structure to support the design of curriculum to address this neurological variability. By providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression in the curriculum from the beginning, all students can become "expert learners," which includes being resourceful, strategic, and purposeful toward a goal.

Intersections

Both the UDL and DI frameworks recognize that each learner is different (DI) or variable (UDL). Setting clear goals and matching assessment to instruction, especially through ongoing, formative assessment is essential for students to reach goals. In addition, both DI and UDL provide flexibility in terms of how students work to reach learning goals.

DI emphasizes the central role of the teacher in customizing instruction at the classroom level in order to identify and support the interests, learning needs, and characteristics of specific students or groups of students. This responsive learning process can be applied to learning tasks and/or assessments to engage students and to provide appropriate and authentic learning and assessment opportunities for each student. Students often have choice and flexibility in assignments and in how they demonstrate what they have learned.

UDL provides an overarching framework for designing a flexible curriculum for the broadest range of students by building flexibility into learning tools and experiences from the beginning, thus making customization at the point of instruction feasible. The UDL Guidelines provide suggestions, based on research in the learning sciences, for how to design curriculum effectively with flexible options that can support a student becoming an "expert learner" (resourceful, strategic, and purposeful) in any context. Options are available for all students as they work to reach the same, high-level goal.

To meet the needs of all students, both UDL and DI recognize that cornerstones to learning address key aspects: UDL—engagement, representation, and strategies for action and expression; DI—readiness, interests, and learner profile. It is essential to have some flexibility in the materials and methods offered to students in support of their goals. However, UDL emphasizes proactive design of the environment and curricula while DI emphasizes responding to individual needs. Together, they can provide a powerful combination of strategies to meet the needs of all students as they work to reach the goals of instruction successfully.

Top 5 UDL Tips
for Reducing Stereotype Threat

How can educators create welcoming social and emotional climates that improve learning opportunities for each one of our learners? Reduce or eliminate stereotype threat to encourage everyone to participate!

Stereotype threat is the feeling that you might confirm a negative stereotype about a group to which you belong. That feeling can have a negative impact on performance. These tips are based on solid, replicated research that has shown significant promise in improving the social and emotional climate in learning environments. Use the **Ask Yourself** questions to think about these tips using the UDL framework.

1 Provide mastery-oriented feedback

Mastery-oriented feedback emphasizes effort rather than perceived innate abilities, according to Carol Dweck's research. This can reduce stereotype threat by focusing on the process all learners can take to achieve the learning goal.

Try it! Emphasize strategies and persistence rather than intelligence. For example, give feedback such as, "I see you used the strategy we talked about. Your work has paid off." Avoid praise feedback like, "you're so smart!"

Ask yourself:

- Does my feedback support growth and persistence?
- Am I sharing examples of strategies that lead to success?

2 Implement self-affirmation practices

Self-affirmation activities help learners recognize their individual strengths and interests, and have a significant impact on student achievment. Studies show that a brief self-affirmation exercise can reduce the racial achievement gap by up to 40%, and the effects can persist for months.

Try it! Start the day with an opportunity to reflect on individual values, ideas, and beliefs. This could be a writing prompt as simple as "Something I value a lot is…" or "I think a strength of mine is…" Find some great games for teaching affirmation to teens on the LiveStrong website.

Ask yourself:

- What opportunities am I creating for learners to recall feeling confident?
- How can I help learners focus on what they believe they are good at?

3 Foster emotional awareness

Encourage learners to recognize and identify their moods and understand that moods can be used productively or can be changed. This can reduce stereotype threat by helping learners see emotions as individual and related to changing contexts, rather than innate and unchangeable.

Try it! Help learners capture their changing moods by using tools such as the Yale Center on Emotional Intelligence Mood Meter.

Ask yourself:

- How might learners' moods be a barrier? How might they be an opportunity?
- What opportunities am I creating for learners to recognize, label, and identify the cause of their emotions? How can I help learners use this knowledge to make a plan to maximize learning?

4 Reframe tasks

Increase learner effort and engagement by both affirming that tasks are fairly designed and providing assurance that performance is not equivalent to intelligence or ability.

Try it! When setting a task for a class, try, "What we're doing today is challenging, but I've worked hard to make sure everyone can be successful."

Ask yourself:

- Am I assuring learners that tasks are designed in a fair and unbiased way?
- Do I regularly clarify that intelligence and performance are not the same?

5 Support positive, productive peer-to-peer interactions

Support peer interactions by building learners' skills in contributing and listening to all members of the group. This can reduce stereotype threat by helping to build a classroom community where all learners recognize individual strengths and support each other to achieve the learning goals.

Try it! When a learner has contributed a thought to the group, have that learner wait 60 seconds before contributing again. This provides others with time to share and gives active contributors the opportunity to listen and learn from others. Watch a video that has great examples of how to develop positive peer-to-peer interactions.

Ask yourself:

- How can I make sure all learners see themselves as unique individuals with important perspectives to contribute to group thinking?
- How can I empower learners to use mood reappraisal, self-affirmation, and feedback themselves in order to reduce the impact of stereotype threat and enhance learning?

Additional Resources

Read

- To learn more about stereotype threat and the research around it, visit Reducing Stereotype Threat.
- In his Edutopia blog post, "Educate to Liberate: Build an Anti-Racist Classroom," humanities teacher Joshua Block discusses five ways to build a safe, respectful environment to support and empower all learners.
- New research shows that the self-affirmation exercise described in this module has positive benefits for everyone in a class. Read more about it in "Shielding a few students from stereotypes benefits everyone's grades."
- Read about The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's recent research on the impact of teaching social and emotional intelligence skills in "Emotions Matter."

Watch

- In "What is Stereotype Threat?" YouTube author Conjecture provides a quick, engaging overview of stereotype threat, associated research, and examples of its impact.
- In "How Stereotype Affect Us and What We Can Do: An Introduction to Stereotype Threat," Facing History and Ourselves presents Jonathan Lykes and Researcher Claude Steele in an overview of stereotype threat.

Discover

- Take a short survey and discover your own mindset at Test Your Mindset.
- Get some strategies for how to change your, and your students', mindset at How can you change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset?
- Check out the Social and Emotional Learning Group on Edutopia for resources and discussion on how to support students to develop skills.
- Explore how Universal Design for Learning can enhance social learning and ensure that all students can learn from one another, from UDL on Campus.