UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING AT CLEMSON

THE WHAT, HOW, AND WHY OF LEARNING

UDL refers to curriculum that can be used and understood by everyone and provides genuine learning opportunities for every unique student. Students can learn fully by:

1. recognizing what they are learning,
2. developing skills and strategies for learning that content, and
3. identifying reasons and internal motivation for caring and prioritizing the learning.

To create universally designed courses for our diverse students, first identify:

o What is my goal? What do I want my students to know, do and value?
o What barriers in the classroom might interfere with diverse students reaching these goals?

Because we cannot predict all the barriers, give students **more than one way** to access and interact with course content, develop understanding and show mastery, and engage with the course in a way that increases motivation. Help them persist and successfully learn.

WHY UDL?

Principles of universal design overlap extensively with other movements in higher education instruction, including:

- **Teaching to diversity** by building an inclusive classroom. Often students do better when they are free to access learning in different ways.
- **Meeting accessibility standards**, as when individual students request accommodations. All online courses and course materials must be accessible.
- **Meeting the needs of "Gen Z" students**, who are asking for more collaboration, personal relevance, and autonomy in their learning.
- **Using effective teaching strategies**, as supported by educational and psychological research. Most teaching suggestions for UDL are also the top strategies for evidence-based teaching.

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- **Academic control** of our teaching: as faculty, UDL principles do not tell us how to teach but instead provide a framework for making decisions about course design and delivery.

Universal Design for Learning is an approach to curriculum that minimizes barriers and maximizes learning for all students.

Use these three principles to create flexible paths to learning:

Provide multiple means of representation
Provide multiple means of action and expression
Provide multiple means of engagement

Q & A

Q. I teach very effectively. Why do I need to consider UDL?

Our student body changes continually. Adopting universal design principles can help us help students learn best—without having to "adapt" for individual students. Instead, students have more responsibility for learning decisions.

Q. It sounds like a lot of work. Why should I change how I teach?

Many instructional strategies already meet UDL principles; we can do more easily. Universal design requires of us an orientation to student learning that ultimately brings in student responsibility for their own learning—something we all want!

Q. What problem am I solving? Why change if there is no problem?

For example, about 16% of low-income college students (National Center for Education Statistics. Nov 7, 2017) and nearly 30% of incoming freshmen nationwide have at least one disability (The HERI's 2016 American Freshman survey). Not all identify publically. Instructors may not know what students need but UDL can help

Some text adapted from Cast.org resources. Clemson's support units include CCIT, Clemson Online, & OTEI, in partnership with the Accessibility Commission. For more information on accessibility, visit the Accessibility Portal: http://www.clemson.edu/accessibility/. For a full course on UDL, go into Clemson's Canvas and enroll in Implementing UDL in Canvas, by Dr. Eric Moore. The course includes a video of his talk on UDL.