



Stony Brook University

Reframing Assessment with UDL in Mind

Enhancing Inclusive Learning at the Program Level

Office of Educational Effectiveness
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Workshop Facilitators



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Workshop Objectives

- Explore how universal design for learning (UDL) principles apply to program-level assessment.
- Discuss strategies for designing inclusive assessments that reflect program outcomes.
- Engage with relevant literature and resources on UDL and program-level assessment.

Program Assessment vs Course Assessment

Program Assessment



Measure the culmination of learning



Align course objectives with program objectives



Support data collection

Course Assessment



Measure the attainment of learning



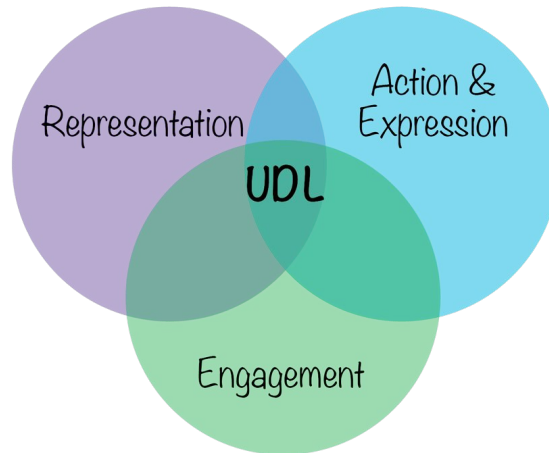
Align course activities with course objectives



Revise course using data

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is a framework to guide the design of learning environments that are **accessible, inclusive, equitable, and challenging for every learner**. Ultimately, the goal of UDL is to support learner agency. The framework is organized into a series of principles for lesson planning and implementation that when applied, removes barriers and provides access to learning for all.



Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

The goal of UDL is **learner agency** that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented.

Design Multiple Means of
Engagement →



Design Multiple Means of
Representation →



Design Multiple Means of
Action & Expression →



*"UDL aims to **change the design of the environment rather than to situate the problem as a perceived deficit** within the learner. When environments are intentionally designed to reduce barriers, every learner can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning."*

Exploring UDL Principles in Program-Level Assessment

- **Ensure Alignment with Program Learning Objectives (PLOs):** UDL principles help ensure that assessments are designed to measure PLOs in ways that are accessible to all students.
- **Provide Multiple Means of Demonstration:** At the program level, offer diverse methods (e.g., portfolios, presentations, research projects) for students to demonstrate their mastery of key competencies.
- **Increase Student Engagement Across the Program:** Use UDL to incorporate varied assessments throughout the program, keeping students engaged and motivated as they progress through different stages of their degree.
- **Support Lifelong Learning Skills:** By applying UDL to program assessments, students develop critical skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, and communication, preparing them for success beyond graduation.
- **Foster Equity in Program Completion:** UDL assessments reduce barriers, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability or background—have equitable opportunities to achieve program outcomes.

Practical Strategies for UDL Assessments

Strategy 1: Flexible Assessment Methods

Use various types of assessments (e.g., written, oral, visual) to cater to different learning styles.

Strategy 2: Scaffolded Supports

Provide resources and supports that help all students succeed (e.g., study guides, practice tests).

Strategy 3: Clear and Consistent Feedback

Offer timely and constructive feedback to guide student learning and improvement.

Practical Strategies for UDL Assessments

1. Apply UDL Best Practices to your Program Assessment Plan:

- Ensure that PLOs are clear, measurable, and targets the skill needed to assess mastery.
- Example: A Computer Science program outcome might include demonstrating coding proficiency through traditional projects, oral code explanations, or simulations.

2. Diversify Program Capstone Assessments:

- Incorporate multiple ways to assess final program objectives.
- Example: For a Business major, capstone assessments might allow students to submit a business plan, pitch a startup, or create a financial model.

3. Create Program-Level Feedback Mechanisms:

- Create a feedback system that helps students track their progress toward mastering program objectives.
- Example: Use formative program reviews or portfolio assessments where students reflect on their learning journey throughout the program.

What is Backward Design?

Backward design involves *'starting with the end in mind'* and **prioritizes learning outcomes rather than topics.**

Traditional Approach

1. Identify relevant topics and content.
2. Design lesson plans.
3. Design assessments.

Backward Design

1. Identify desired results (PLOs).
2. Determine acceptable evidence results (assessment methods).
3. Plan teaching & learning experiences.

Backward Design

1. Learning outcomes

What learners should know, do, and be at the end

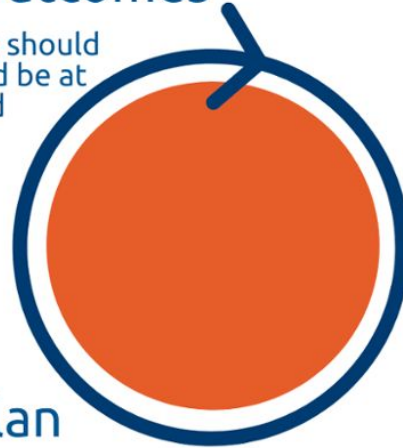
Re-evaluate in subsequent offerings

3. Learning plan

Sequence of lessons, resources, teaching strategies

2. Determine evidence

How you know learners have achieved the objectives



Integrating UDL with Backward Design

UDL principles align with the backward design approach by **focusing on the end goals** and **ensuring diverse pathways** to achieving those goals.

- Connect to Your Curriculum Map
 - What courses align best with PLOs?
- Identify Desired Results (Benchmarks)
 - What performance benchmark allows for fairness, but also offers information on how well students have captured the content?
- Determine Acceptable Evidence
 - What assessment methods provide the fullest picture of student achievement and give students agency in their learning?
- Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction
 - What content and assessments will support student motivation?

Examples

Example 1: Inclusive Writing Assignments (Humanities)

- **Traditional Method:** Standard essay
- **UDL Approach:** Offer options for students to submit work in different formats (e.g., essay, blog post, video essay, podcasts).

Example 2: Interactive Projects (Humanities)

- **Traditional Method:** Group presentation
- **UDL Approach:** Design group projects that allow students to contribute in ways that align with their strengths (e.g., research, creative design, presenting).

Examples

Example 3: Lab Reports (Physics)

- **Traditional Method:** Written lab report
- **UDL Approach:** Allow students to submit lab reports as written documents, video explanations, or digital simulations.

Example 4: Problem-Solving Tasks (Physics)

- **Traditional Method:** Solving problems on paper
- **UDL Approach:** Provide options for students to demonstrate their problem-solving process through written solutions, oral presentations, or visual representations (e.g., diagrams, digital tools).

Further Reading & Resources

Black, R. D., Weinberg, L. A., & Brodwin, M. G. (2015). Universal design for learning and instruction: Perspectives of students with disabilities in higher education. *Exceptionality Education International*, 25(2).

<https://doi.org/10.5206/eei.v25i2.7723>

Rao, K., & Tanners, A. (2011). Curb Cuts in Cyberspace: Universal Instructional Design for Online Courses. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 24(3), 211–.

Roberts, K. D., Park, H. J., Brown, S., & Cook, B. (2011). Universal Design for Instruction in Postsecondary Education: A Systematic Review of Empirically Based Articles. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 24(1), 5–.

Schelly, C. L., Davies, P. L., & Spooner, C. L. (2011). Student Perceptions of Faculty Implementation of Universal Design for Learning. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 24(1), 17–.

Q&A and Discussion

- How can you apply UDL principles in your current program assessment practices?
- What challenges might you face in implementing UDL principles, and how can you overcome them?

Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

*For Additional Support with
Course-level Assessment:*

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ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS

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2024



Join OEE for its Fall 2024 workshop series on best practices and innovations in assessment! Register at the QR code below.

- Reframing Assessment with UDL in Mind
Sept. 16 at 11am & Sept. 17 at 2pm
- Beyond Bloom's: Exploring Different Taxonomies for Assessment
Oct. 1 at 1pm & Oct. 3 at 10am
- Leveraging AI in Assessment
Oct. 17 at 10:30am & Oct. 21 at 12pm
- Why Assessment Works: Evidence Based Examples
Nov. 11 at 11:30am & Nov. 12 at 2pm
- Including the Student Voice in Assessment
Nov. 21 at 11:30am & Nov. 22 at 2pm





Stony Brook University

Thank you!

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