An Introduction to the UDL Framework

By: **Joanna Friend**

Universal Design for Learning is based on the architectural concept of **universal design,** which seeks to ensure that built environments be used to the greatest extent possible by as many people as possible. Just like universal design asserts that people with a variety of different access needs can and should fully participate in public space, UDL assumes the same for learning spaces, materials, and experiences. However, by proactively removing barriers to learning for individuals with disabilities we are also supporting a whole diversity of learners. In fact, everyone has a variable learning profile. We have strengths and we have challenges. Sometimes it is related to context (as mentioned the previous **UDL Xchange feature**).
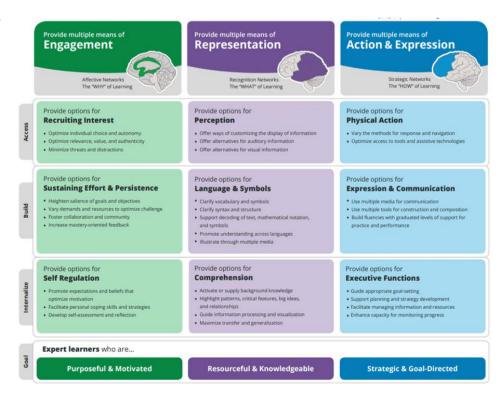
Frequently, we tend to evaluate students using a statistical mean, which, in turn, causes us to overlook the unique abilities and potential within our community. The concept of the "jagged learning profile," as coined by **Todd Rose,** sheds light on the significance of individuality. It highlights the necessity of creating adaptable environments that can cater to the diverse needs of everyone involved. By prioritizing the design of educational settings for those on the periphery, we unlock the full capabilities and potential of each individual.

UDL is a framework created by **CAST** for teaching and learning that sheds light on the wide variety of dimensions of learning. CAST provides a **graphic matrix**, which is organized by three areas: **1)** the principles, **2)** the guidelines, and **3)** the check-points.

The principles of Engagement, Representation, and Action & Expression name the three overarching groups. Each Principle has 3 guidelines and each of the 9 guidelines have checkpoints (or strategies) to consider when designing learning spaces, materials, and experiences.

This video taken from **GBC's UDL Certificate** course explains how the matrix is broken down: **An Introduction to UDL.**

Coming up next at TLX:

Cool Edtech Tools: h5P (October 25): Join us for any or all the sessions in our Cool Edtech Tool Series to learn and play with some fun, simple, but powerful tools. These sessions are designed with beginner to intermediate users of Educational Technology in mind, but all are welcome to join and play! **Register Here.**

UDL Certificate, Cohort 1: Engagement (October 25): Registration Closed.

UDL Certificate, Cohort 2: Engagement (October 26,27): Registration Closed.

One size fits none: using educational technology tools to support UDL (October 31): In this session, we'll use scenarios to explore the UDL guidelines of providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action & expression, and how educational technology tools can help support them. **Register Here.**

Passport to Teaching Effectiveness: Creating Engaging and Effective Assessments (November 1,3): After this session, participants will be able to understand the connection between assessment and student engagement, how to define authentic assessments; and how using rubrics can save time and enhance the quality of your feedback. You will also be able to understand the importance of alignment between your assessments and your course's learning outcomes. **Register here.**

UDL Certificate, Cohort 1: Representation (November 6): Registration Closed.

The UDL Practice Zone – A Peer Support Space (November 6): If you'd appreciate an opportunity to gather with peers on a regular basis and talk through what it means to practice UDL, join us for UDL Practice Zone – A Peer Support Space. **Register here.**

UDL in D2L: Making the most of the LMS – Multiple Means of Engagement (November 7): This is the first session of three in a series on finding ways to incorporate UDL elements into our learning management system, Brightspace (D2L). In this first session, a definition of multiple means of engagement will be shared. By the end of the first session, participants will leave with some applicable ideas for using Brightspace features to increase engagement. **Register here.**

OER Mini-Series

This three-part series is very much about selecting and evaluating, creating, and using Open Educational Resources (OER). We will also discuss Open Pedagogical (OP) practices in post-secondary education. Bring your questions about OER and OP. The available support at the college and resources will be shared. Each workshop will include a presentation and an open discussion. Register now in Cornerstone with the links below:

Workshop 1 - Get Familiar with OER
October 31, 11am to 12:30 pm

Workshop 2 - Finding OER
November 7, 11am to 12:30 pm

Workshop 3 - Creating OER
November 14, 11am to 12:30 pm

Fall Intersession

CO-PRESENTED WITH THE OFFICE OF ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICES (OAREHRS) AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Following our successful back-to-school keynote event with Dr. Sami Schalk, Fall Intersession programming will focus on strategies to make GBC a more accessible and equitable college. Stay tuned for asynchronous resources released in the days prior to intersession week, and join us for the synchronous programming below:

Student Panel on Accessibility at GBC
Thursday, October 26th, 9:30am – 11:00 am
Learn from current GBC students where they experience unmet needs and how they imagine a more accessible college. Presented online via Zoom.

Accessible Pedagogy Learning Circle
Thursday, October 26th, 11:30am – 1:00 pm
Join your colleagues from across the college as they share exciting experiments and innovative practices in accessible pedagogy. Presented online via Zoom.

Empowering Affective Integrity: Affective Assessments, Academic Integrity And A.I. (SJC 202 OR ZOOM)
Thursday, October 26th – 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm
Facilitator: Professor Aedan Alderson (He/Him)
Format: Online (Room available for those on-campus who are joining this session SJC 202. Please be sure to bring headphones as this is a shared space.)
Join a discussion about increasing affective engagement as a strategy for mitigating concerns about A.I. technology.

Access & Disability Fundamentals to Action (for Educators)
Thursday, October 26th, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Presented by OAREHRS
Engage in a participatory workshop to understand the fundamentals of access and disability and what you can do to shape more accessible George Brown College.

Cool Edtech Tools Series 💡

Are you looking for ideas to engage your students, provide choice, promote collaboration, spark creativity, and innovate in the classroom? Join us online for any or all the sessions in our **Cool Edtech Tool Series** to learn and play with some fun, simple, but powerful tools. These sessions are designed with beginner to intermediate users of educational technology in mind, but all are welcome to join and play!

Register now in **Cornerstone** with the links below:

H5P – Interactive learning objects that can be integrated in Brightspace
Wednesday, October 25 – 11:00 – 12:30 pm

Nearpod – Interactive presentations
Wednesday, November 8 – 11:00 –12:30 pm

Miro – A flexible and sophisticated collaborative whiteboard
Wednesday, November 22 – 11:00 –12:30 pm

About TLX

The Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX) serves as a 'one-stop-shop' for all full-time and contract faculty at GBC in support of their teaching and learning-related needs. We aspire to create a community of excellence in teaching and learning by fostering partnerships with and among faculty. We model innovative, evidence-informed practices and open spaces for risk-taking and experimentation so that George Brown learners are immersed in transformative learning experiences led by innovative and adaptive faculty.

Contact Us

To contact any members of the TLX visit the **Contact Us** page on our TLX website.

If you are not already, **click here** to subscribe to the newsletter.

Coach's Corner

It's Intersession Week already, and that means we are halfway through the semester. What better time to take a mid-semester personal check up. How might you "check the pulse" of your teaching, learning and working spaces? What's contributing to the good health of your systems, and what do you need to keep doing to maintain vitality? Are there any minor symptoms or irritations that might need paying attention to? Maybe it's time to add some supplements, perhaps in the way of new learning, for that much needed energy boost for the second half of the semester. Update your vaccines, get your flu shots and have a great Intersession Week.

Nicki Monahan , TLX Faculty Facilitator