

Universal Design for Learning: Multiple Means of Engagement

Earner increases student engagement by applying the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principle of Multiple Means of Engagement.

Key Method

The earner increases student engagement by providing options to sustain effort and persistence, for recruiting interest, and for self-regulation to create purpose and motivation for learning.

Method Components

Affective Networks: Design Multiple Means of Engagement

Affective Networks control the critical elements of the brain that regulate the emotional involvement in learning, such as interest, attention, motivation, and persistence. For this reason, the Affective Network is referred to as the “why” of learning and is the first principle of UDL. Without engagement, learning does not take place. By sharing the “why” of learning with students, educators can help students develop the purpose and motivation required to become expert learners. Education professionals who design learning to increase student engagement offer

- options that incorporate students’ interests into instructional activities.
- structures and tools that support students in their efforts to maintain concentration and persist toward the learning objective.
- strategies students can use to self-regulate their emotions and motivations for learning.

The following guidelines and considerations provide an in-depth understanding of the Affective Networks.

Guideline 7: Design Options for Welcoming Interest and Identities

Students enter our classrooms with vastly different interests and backgrounds, so educators who increase engagement consider ways to provide students with choices in content and instructional activities designed to meet the learning objective. Educators support Guideline 7 by applying the following considerations.

- **Consideration 7.1: Optimize choice and autonomy.** One way to increase student engagement is to offer students choices related to learning. When possible, allow students to choose the tools and resources they will use to meet their learning goals, the types of products they create to demonstrate learning, and how their learning will be assessed.
- **Consideration 7.2: Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity.** Students who feel the learning is relevant and authentic often engage more deeply with the content. Connecting learning to real world experiences or demonstrating learning for a real audience make learning meaningful and valuable to students.
- **Consideration 7.3: Nurture joy and play.** Acts of playfulness can spark curiosity, creativity, and imagination resulting in a learning environment that allows students to be joyful and take pride in their accomplishments.
- **Consideration 7.4: Address biases, threats and distractions.** For students to be engaged, they must feel accepted and supported in an atmosphere where they feel safe to demonstrate and share their learning with classmates.

Guideline 8: Design Options for Sustaining Effort and Persistence

After the initial engagement, most learning requires students to sustain their motivation, concentration, effort, and persistence in order to complete the learning goal. Ways to support students in sustaining effort and persistence include using cooperative learning or peer collaboration activities, ensuring learning objectives are explicitly stated and visible to students, and offering multiple opportunities for specific, goal-oriented feedback during the learning process. Educators support Guideline 8 by applying the following considerations.

- **Consideration 8.1: Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals.** Post explicitly stated learning goals and objectives that are readily accessible to students. Consistently reinforce for learners why the goal is important.
- **Consideration 8.2: Optimize challenge and Support.** Provide scaffolds and supports that allow students to be challenged, but not overwhelmed, by rigorous learning goals.
- **Consideration 8.3: Foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning.** Creating communities of learners who collectively generate knowledge is a powerful way to sustain effort and persistence as students work together toward learning goals.

- **Consideration 8.4: Foster Belonging and Community.** Establish a warm inviting classroom environment where students feel encouraged to engage with course content, classmates, and the teacher.
- **Consideration 8.5: Offer action-oriented feedback.** Provide students with personalized, actionable feedback that promotes a growth mindset, and values effort and persistence over innate ability.

Guideline 9: Design Options for Emotional Capacity

To reach their learning goals, students not only need to learn to sustain effort and persistence, but also to self-regulate through cycles of setting goals, monitoring their progress, and reflecting on their performance. Education professionals support students with self-regulation by demonstrating their own knowledge, skills, and abilities for coping with challenges and setbacks. Strategies that support self-regulation include using academic or behavioral rubrics or checklists for self-monitoring and self-reflection, explicitly teaching coping skills, and allowing students to set personal goals. Educators support Guideline 9 through the following considerations.

- **Consideration 9.1: Recognize expectations, beliefs, and motivations.** Encourage students to set high expectations for learning and maintain motivation by tracking their progress toward mastery.
- **Consideration 9.2: Develop Awareness of Self and Others.** Teach students strategies for managing and directing their emotional responses to external events. When students experience emotional setbacks, ensure they have coping skills they can apply to real-life situations.
- **Consideration 9.3: Promote individual and collective reflection.** Equip students to recognize individual and collective progress toward learning goals by reflecting on data displays and charting progress to sustain motivation.
- **Consideration 9.4: Cultivate empathy and restorative practices.** Include practices that foster empathy among learners by being aware of different perspectives and practicing communication skills that build community.

Supporting Rationale and Research

The Supporting Rationale and Research includes important resources for incorporating the Universal Design for Learning: Multiple Means of Engagement. Some resources provided in this section align with UDL version 2.2, but provide useful information that will help you develop a deeper understanding of the guidelines and considerations.

UDL: Multiple Means of Engagement

CAST. (2024). The UDL guidelines (version 3.0). <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>.

How to Read the UDL Guidelines. This [resource](#) explains how to read and understand the UDL Guidelines and Consideration graphic organizer developed by CAST.

Top 10 UDL Tips for Designing an Engaging Learning Environment. Developed by CAST, this [document](#) emphasizes the essential role of engagement in the deliberate design of the learning environment.

Guide to Universal Design for Learning: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement. This [website](#) provides an overview of the UDL principle of engagement and information related to each checkpoint.

UDL Academy Engagement. This video series includes an [Introduction to UDL Engagement](#) and provides strategies for implementing the checkpoints of [Recruiting Interest](#), [Sustaining Effort](#), and [Self-Regulation](#).

UDL-Aligned Strategies. This [website](#) offers instructional methods and tools to help educators ensure all students have opportunities to learn. The strategies align UDL networks and guidelines (Version 2.2). (Note: This website may require you to set up a free account to access this resource.)

Multiple Means of Engagement. Created by ISTE, this 10-minute [video](#) explains the UDL principle of engagement and its supporting guidelines.

Schlechty's Levels of Engagement. This [video](#) by John Spencer provides an overview of a framework for thinking about student engagement based on two core ideas of attention and commitment.

Student Choice

Student Voice. This [paper](#) defines student voice, outlines the benefits, and provides a description of the various types of student voice.

Choice Menus. This [article](#) from Cult of Pedagogy provides examples of different ways to create choice menus.

Choice Boards: Benefits, Design Tips, and Differentiation. In this [blog](#), Dr. Catlin Tucker provides an overview of the benefits of using choice boards and explains how to use them to universally design learning experiences for students.

Embedding Choice in Student Learning. This [resource](#) includes suggestions for ways to offer students choices in learning design.

I Let Students Choose Their Grading Criteria, Here's How It Went. In this [article](#), a teacher shares his experience giving students a voice in how their work is graded.

Building a Community of Learners

23 Ways to Build and Sustain Classroom Relationships. This [article](#) describes fun practical ways to build community among students in your class.

10 Powerful Community Building Ideas. This [article](#) from Edutopia identifies 10 easy to use strategies—many with videos of classroom implementation.

The First Days: Building a Community of Learners. This [video](#) highlights how a high school science teacher utilized strategies to build a community of learners.

Feedback

Mastery Oriented Feedback. This [resource](#) crosswalks goals of feedback to mastery oriented feedback practices (adapted from CAST).

Here's How to Give Feedback That Students Will Actually Use. This [article](#) from EducationWeek offers practical suggestions based on research for improving the feedback students receive.

5 Research-Based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback. Backed by research, this Edutopia [resource](#) recommends 5 ways to better meet students' needs for constructive feedback.

Persistence and Motivation

What Does It Mean to Have High Expectations for Your Students? This [article](#) includes a user-friendly video explaining the Pygmalion Effect and the importance of Carol Dweck's research on having a growth mindset.

Six Strategies for Promoting Student Autonomy. This [article](#) shares six strategies educators can use to foster student independence and help students support themselves and their peers.

3 Ways to Boost Students' Motivation to Learn. This [article](#) discusses the importance of monitoring progress, providing feedback, and setting micro-goals as motivators for student engagement.

The ABCs of Self-Regulation for Learning (SRL). This [blog](#) defines the ABCs of self-regulation for learning and offers strategies to develop SRL in the classroom.

Additional Resources

Assistive Technology Resource Guide for Arkansas Schools. Assistive technology is used to increase or improve the independence of a student with a disability in education. This [guide](#) places an increased focus on assistive technology and the application to a Universal Design for Learning Framework.

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials. The [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning](#) at CAST provides technical assistance, coaching, and resources to increase the availability and use of accessible educational materials and technologies for learners with disabilities across the lifespan.

Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

This micro-credential is divided into three areas: Overview, Artifacts and Evidence, and Reflection. To earn this micro-credential, you must receive “Passing” on Parts One and Three, and “Yes” on all criteria in Part Two.

Part One. Overview

Prompt: Use the [UDL Overview Progression Rubric](#) to self-assess your current implementation of Multiple Means of Engagement. Submit the completed UDL Overview Progression Rubric as one of your artifacts.

In addition, provide a written response in which you explain your current educational setting and the context in which you are implementing UDL for this micro-credential. Include the following:

- grade level(s) served and content or specialty area
- challenges you currently face with student engagement
- specific ways you hope this micro-credential will enhance student engagement

This submission is scored either “passing” or “not passing.”

Passing: Earner submits a completed UDL Progression Rubric self-assessment and includes a written response that addresses each bulleted item; total written response should be at least 250-words and provide adequate detail to help the assessor understand the context for your submission.

Part Two. Artifacts and Evidence

Read the Artifacts and Evidence Submission requirements carefully to ensure a thorough understanding of the expectations for a “Yes” on each task.

Task 1: Building a Community of Learners

Select and implement a series of 3-5 strategies designed to build community among learners. The strategies should provide both you and your students with insight into their shared interests as individuals and their preferences for learning. The strategies should be quick and easy to implement so they enhance—not supplant—academic content.

In a written response describe

- the strategies and the context for their implementation.
- how specific students responded to the strategies.
- the ways the strategies helped establish a sense of belonging or community among students.

As evidence for this task, include the written response (300-word minimum) and at least one artifact for each strategy. If you include video links, be sure to allow access so anyone with the link can view.

Please submit the written response and evidence of implementation with the titles “Task 1 Written Response”, “Task 1 Strategy 1.” etc. as evidence for Task 1.

Task 2: Incorporating Choice into Learning Design

Select an Arkansas academic learning standard for your content. Using [this resource](#) as a guide, select at least one option from Column A for each color to help you design choices that will increase engagement with the academic standard. Resources with examples of Choice Boards, Choice Menus, and other ways to incorporate choice are included in the Rationale and Research section of the micro-credential.

In a written response, provide

- a description of the choices students are offered.
- an explanation of how the choices you incorporated reflect the UDL Guidelines and Considerations in the Method Components section of this micro-credential.
- data for the number of students who selected each option.
- specific ways that incorporating choice increased student engagement.

As evidence for this task, submit the written response (300-word minimum) and the student interfacing document (poster, slide deck, handout, electronic document, etc.) that shows how you presented the choices to students.

Please submit with the title “Task 2 Written Response” and “Task 2 Student Choice Document” as evidence for Task 2.

Task 3: Providing Feedback and Monitoring Learning

Analyze completed student work from Task 2. Select one student whose work product does not meet the criteria established for proficiency and one student who turned in a work sample that meets the criteria, but does not reflect his or her potential as a learner.

Provide students with specific, actionable feedback based on the scoring criteria. After students have had the opportunity to revise their work products in response to the feedback, submit the first product, the feedback provided to the two students (a video recording of the oral feedback and/or a copy of the written feedback), and the revised student product. Include a brief written explanation of how both students responded to the feedback and whether their work products reflect their application or understanding of the feedback. Be sure to refer to the articles in the Resources section for best practices.

Please submit the student work products and feedback to students with the titles “Task 3 Student Product #1,” “Task 3 Oral Feedback,” “Task 3 Written Feedback,” and “Task 3 Student Product #2” as evidence for Task 3.

Artifacts and Evidence Scoring Guide

Tasks	Not Yet	Almost	Yes
Task 1: Student Preferences for Learning	The earner does not submit the required evidence and artifacts for Task 1.	The earner submits a written response of less than 300 words, the response describes 1-2 strategies, does not explain how specific students responded to the strategies, or the ways the strategies helped establish community or belonging among students. AND The artifacts in the submission provide some evidence of partial implementation with students.	The earner submits a written response (300 word minimum) that thoroughly describes 3-5 strategies for building community with students and the context for their implementation; how specific students responded to the strategies; and ways the strategies helped establish community or belonging among students. AND The submission includes at least one artifact for each strategy that provides convincing evidence of implementation with students.

<p>Task 2: Designing Options for Learning</p>	<p>The earner does not submit the required evidence and artifacts for Task 2.</p>	<p>The earner submits a written response that does not include an Arkansas academic standard or includes a partial description of the choices or is missing one of more color items from Column A; partially explains how the choices reflect the UDL Guidelines and Considerations for Multiple Means of Engagement, does not include the number of students who selected each option, or partially explains how incorporating choice increased engagement.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The submission does not include the student interfacing document.</p>	<p>The earner submits a written response that includes an Arkansas academic standard, a thorough description of the choices embedded in the lesson design (at least one from each color in Column A), explains how the choices reflect the UDL Guidelines and Considerations for designing Multiple Means of Engagement, the number of students who selected each option, and specific ways incorporating choice increased engagement.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The earner submits the student interfacing document displaying choices aligned to the learning standard.</p>
<p>Task 3: Implement Options for Engagement and Monitoring Learning</p>	<p>The earner does not submit the required evidence and artifacts for Task 3.</p>	<p>The earner submits evidence that is incomplete or partially aligned to required evidence and artifacts for Task 3.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The feedback is vague, not fully actionable, or only partially reflects best practices outlined in the feedback articles from the Resource Section of the micro-credential.</p>	<p>The earner submits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work products prior to receiving feedback for two students. • video of oral feedback and/or written feedback provided to each student • work products for two students after feedback is provided. • a brief explanation of how the revised work sample reflects students' understanding or application of the feedback. <p>AND</p> <p>The feedback is clear, actionable, and demonstrates best practices outlined in the feedback articles from the Resource Section of the micro-credential.</p>

Part 3. Reflection

Read the Reflection criteria carefully to ensure a thorough understanding of the expectations for a “passing” submission.

Prompt: Use the [UDL Reflection Progression Rubric](#) to reflect on and self-assess your implementation of Multiple Means of Engagement. Submit the completed UDL Reflection Progression Rubric self-assessment and provide **specific evidence in the template** to support an improved Consideration rating.

This submission is scored either “passing” or “not passing.”

Passing: Earner submits a completed UDL Reflection Progression Rubric as a self-assessment. The completed rubric shows thoughtful reflection to determine the ratings and describes authentic evidence on which the rating is based.