

# Universal Design for Learning: Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Educator provides students with multiple ways to express their learning of academic content by applying the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principle of Multiple Means of Action and Expression.

## Key Method

The educator strategically designs learning that offers students three different options for demonstrating and monitoring their learning of the same content.

## Method Components

### Strategic Networks: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principle of Providing Multiple Means of Action and Expression connects to strategies that strengthen students' strategic networks. The brain's strategic networks are the "how" of learning—students use them to plan, perform, and monitor how they learn information. Educators can grow students' strategic networks by offering flexibility and options in how students access learning materials and demonstrate their understanding of the content. Rather than providing differentiation on a student-by-student basis, educators anticipate learner variability and embed multiple options for action and expression into the lesson design so that all students have the same opportunities to participate in learning activities and express themselves as their peers.

The following guidelines provide a more in depth understanding of the Strategic Networks.

### Guideline 4: Design Options for Interaction

Making physical and virtual learning environments accessible for all learners reduces barriers to classroom engagement and expression (CAST, 2018). Guideline 4 emphasizes the importance of providing all students with acceptable choices for how they will demonstrate learning outcomes by removing physical and curricular barriers. Properly designed instructional materials and resources provide a seamless interface with common assistive technologies through which students can navigate and express what they know. Educators may introduce students to no- or low-tech assistive technologies which are easy to use and inexpensive (e.g., options to use pencil grips, headphones, keyboards, different writing utensils, printing assignments in larger fonts, color coding). High-tech assistive technologies are usually designed for individuals with

more significant physical impairments (e.g., spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy) and do require a power source. To determine the best and most appropriate tools for students and to learn more about the range of supports available, work closely with the occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists, and assistive technology specialists in your district. Educators support Guideline 4 by considering the following considerations and supporting questions.

- **Consideration 4.1: Vary the methods for response, navigation, and movement.** Reduce barriers for students by providing flexibility in the ways students physically interact with instructional materials. For example, students might use paper/pencil, a word processor, or a dictation application.
- **Consideration 4.2: Optimize access to accessible materials and assistive accessible technologies and tools.** Provide all students with options to use no-tech, low-tech, and high-tech technologies (assistive and/or instructional). Teach them to use the tools before they engage in a challenging task.

### **Guideline 5: Design Options for Expression and Communication**

Educators often rely solely on writing skills as means of students' expression. However, when the learning objective does not specifically require formal writing conventions, students should be allowed and encouraged to express their learning through a variety of communication modes (e.g., slide deck presentations, posters, role-play activities, storytelling, video or music creation). This approach is important not only for students with physical challenges, but students who might need additional time to process or who experience anxiety when asked to speak in front of others. Educators incorporate Guideline 5 by demonstrating the following considerations:

- **Consideration 5.1: Use multiple media for communication.** Provide students with options to express their learning and communicate in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them.
- **Consideration 5.2: Use multiple tools for construction and composition.** When possible, allow students to select the tools and materials they will use to create a product to communicate the learning objective.
- **Consideration 5.3: Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance.** Plan ways to scaffold rigorous tasks that support students' as they practice and demonstrate new skills and knowledge while progressing toward the learning goal.

### **Guideline 6: Strategy Development**

The term executive function is an umbrella term that includes many skills necessary for self-management: focusing attention, managing time, controlling emotion, and

organizing materials. Executive function skills are necessary for students to set goals, develop strategies for achieving goals, and evaluate success. All students vary in their development of these skills, and deficits in executive function may increase learning challenges for students with and without disabilities. Strategies that scaffold executive functioning for students include keeping a calendar or planner, breaking large assignments into smaller tasks, creating checklists, and giving students time to organize their space. Educators support Guideline 6 by considering the following considerations and supporting questions:

- **Consideration 6.1: Set meaningful goals.** Guide students to set goals appropriate to their developmental needs and learning targets and remind them frequently of their goals.
- **Consideration 6.2: Anticipate and plan for challenges.** Explicitly teach students strategies to help them stay on track and reach their goals.
- **Consideration 6.3: Organize information and resources.** Teach students to identify and manage the appropriate resources to help them meet their goals.
- **Consideration 6.4: Enhance capacity for monitoring progress.** Encourage students to monitor their progress and re-evaluate the usefulness of supports and strategies as they work toward their goals.
- **Consideration 6.5: Challenge exclusionary practices.** Provide all students with more meaningful access to spaces, systems, and resources.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

The Supporting Rationale and Research includes resources for learning more about UDL Multiple Means of Action and Expression.

### Research

**UDL in the Early Childhood Classroom.** This [research article](#) provides an overview of strategies that provide all learners various ways to navigate the learning environment, express their understanding, and demonstrate new knowledge and skills.

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

**Universal Design for Learning: Principles and Examples.** This [post](#) from Prodigy provides an easy to understand overview of the three principles with examples for implementation.

**Action and Expression Strategies.** Developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, this 5-minute [video](#) describes strategies for implementing multiple means of action and expression in classrooms.

**UDLA.** The Universal Design for Learning Academy developed a video series focused on UDL Multiple Means of Action and Expression: [Introduction to Action and Expression](#); [Physical Action](#); [Expression and Communication](#); and [Executive Functions](#).

### **Assessments, Rubrics, Choice Boards, and Other Strategies**

**High School Science: UDL in Practice.** In this short [video](#), a high school science teacher shares how she defines specific goals to help make content more relevant to students and explains the different options for students to express their knowledge.

**Lesson Plan Spotlight.** This 3-minute [video](#) illustrates how one educator provided students with options to demonstrate their understanding of content.

**How We Use Digital Text.** In this [video](#), students provide insight into how they use technology (digital text) on a daily basis for educational purposes.

**The Science of Drawing and Memory.** This [resource](#) explains how to use drawing as a powerful tool to boost student learning and how it challenges students to explore an idea in different ways.

**Holistic, Single-point, and Analytic Rubrics, Oh My!** In this [blog](#), Katie Novak explains the value of using rubrics to provide students with clear expectations and the criteria to master goals. Novak describes three rubric options: holistic, analytic, and single-point, and provides examples of each. Infographic: [Quick Access Guide to Universally Designing Rubrics](#).

**Single-Point Rubric.** This [article](#) from Edutopia provides reasons to try a single-point rubric and how to use this format to provide students with feedback. This [blog](#) provides tips for implementing, examples of, and student perspectives of single point rubrics. This [research article](#) describes key features of the single point rubric, how it is used, and how it is different from traditional multiple point rubrics.

**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.

**Teaching Self-Regulation.** This [video](#) illustrates how one teacher incorporates support for choice time to help preschool students learn to take turns and manage their emotions.

### ■ **Technology Related Resources**

**Low-Tech, Mid-Tech, and High-Tech Assistive Technology.** This [blog](#) provides examples of how various technologies can be used in the classroom.

**Texthelp and UDL.** Every student in Arkansas has access to three Texthelp tools—Read&Write, Equation, and uPar—to help increase student achievement in reading and mathematics. Texthelp provides resources and tools to practically implement UDL: [7 UDL Examples and Strategies for the Classroom](#); [Assistive Technology and UDL](#); [Reaching Every Student with Read & Write](#); and [Reaching Every Student with Equatio](#).

**Arkansas Accessible Educational Materials.** This [website](#) is designed to provide information about accessible educational materials, including available resources and services, to Arkansas educators, parents, and students.

**National Center on Accessible Educational Materials.** The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning [website](#) 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.

**Assistive Technology Resource Guide for Schools.** This [Arkansas guide](#) places an increased focus on assistive technology and the application to a UDL Framework.

### **Executive Functions**

**The 3 Areas of Executive Function.** This [article](#) by Understood provides insight into executive function. Links are embedded within the article to learn more about the areas of working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control.

**Executive Function 101.** Developed by the National Center for Learning Disabilities, this [e-Book](#) is designed to explain executive functions in an understandable way and to help pinpoint the struggles students might experience.

**Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning.** This [resource](#) includes a series of brief summaries that identify the skills that are necessary for school achievement and various activities that can be used to help students develop these skills.

**Brain-Based Teaching Strategies to Build Executive Function.** This Edutopia [blog](#) provides strategies that can be used to help build executive function in students.

## **Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria**

This section 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

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

**Prompt:** Use the [UDL Overview Progression Rubric](#) to self-assess your current implementation of Multiple Means of Action and Expression. Submit the completed UDL Progression Rubric self-assessment 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(s)
- barriers or challenges students experience in your classroom or learning environment related to instructional materials and assessments
- specific ways in which you hope the learning in this micro-credential will help you reduce and/or remove the barriers or challenges for all students

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

**Passing:** Earner submits a completed UDL Progression Rubric self-assessment and includes a written response to each part of the prompt; 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: Designing Options for Expression

Design a new learning plan or redesign an existing plan to provide students with at least three options for demonstrating their understanding of content for one academic standard. A template for [Designing Options for Expression](#) is provided; however, you may choose to use a different format or document for this part of the task. The learning plan should include:

- the Arkansas State Standard(s) aligned to the plan exactly as it is worded in the Arkansas Standards.
- the goal(s) of the plan (What do you want all students to know and be able to do?).
- barriers or challenges that students might experience in reaching the learning goal(s).



- a detailed description of each option for students to demonstrate their understanding of the same content. Each option should measure progress toward the same academic standard.

Additionally, submit a written response or a video/audio recording in which you provide a rationale for each option in the learning design. The rationale should explain how each option removes an identified barrier or challenge so that students' can optimize their learning of new content.

*Please submit the lesson design and written response (250-word minimum) or video/audio recording with the titles "Task 1 Designing Options for Expression" and "Task 1 Written Response" or "Task 1 Video/Audio Recording" as evidence for Task 1.*

## **Task 2: Creating Self-Monitoring Tools**

For Task 2,

- Create a tool (e.g., checklist, examples, graphic organizers, digital reflection journal, etc.) specific to each option to aid students with self-monitoring their progress towards meeting the learning goal(s).
- Create one, single-point rubric that provides students with the minimum content requirements regardless of the option they select. A completed rubric with feedback will also be an artifact for Task 3. Sample single-point rubrics, along with research supporting their use, are provided in the resource section of this micro-credential.

Include a written response to explain how each tool and the single-point rubric will support students with improving their self-monitoring and executive functioning skills and remove barriers for students to demonstrate learning.

*Please submit three self-monitoring tools, the single-point rubric, and written response (250-word minimum) with the titles "Task 2 Student Self-Monitoring Tools," "Task 2 Single-Point Rubric," and "Task 2 Written Response" as evidence for Task 2.*

## **Task 3: Impacting Students and the Learning Environment**

Implement the learning plan designed in Task 1 and provide students with the self-monitoring tools from Task 2. Submit one student work product for each of the options provided to students for expressing and/or demonstrating their understanding of the content. For each work sample, include the single-point rubric used to provide feedback to the student on his or her work product.

Additionally, submit an audio recording of a reflective conversation between you and three students (one for each option) in which the student provides his or her rationale

for choosing a particular lesson design and explains how the self-monitoring tools and single-point rubric helped him or her reach the learning goal.

*Please submit the student work products and the audio recording with the titles “Task 3 Student Work Products” and “Task 3 Audio Recording” as evidence for Task 3.*

## ■ Artifacts and Evidence Scoring Guide

| Task<br>s                                | Not Met                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Progressing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Demonstrated                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task 1: Designing Options for Expression | <p>Earner <u>does not submit</u> a learning plan as evidence for Task 1.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earner <u>does not submit</u> a written response or a video/audio recording as evidence for Task 1.</p> | <p>Earner submits a learning plan that <u>includes some but not all</u> criteria as outlined in Task 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arkansas state standard(s)</li> <li>• Student goal(s)</li> <li>• Potential barriers or challenges</li> <li>• Thorough descriptions of the three options for expression and/or demonstration of learning</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earner submits a written response or a video/audio recording that <u>partially</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a rationale for including each option for expression and/or demonstration,</li> <li>• addresses the potential barriers or challenges, and</li> <li>• describes the ways in which the UDL action and expression considerations are incorporated in the learning plan.</li> </ul> | <p>Earner submits a learning plan that <u>includes all</u> criteria as outlined in Task 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arkansas state standard(s)</li> <li>• Student goal(s)</li> <li>• Potential barriers or challenges</li> <li>• Thorough descriptions of the three options for expression and/or demonstration of learning</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Earner submits a written response (250-word minimum) or a video/audio recording that <u>thoroughly</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a rationale for including each option for expression and/or demonstration,</li> <li>• address the potential barriers or challenges for each option, and</li> <li>• describes the ways in which the UDL action and expression considerations are incorporated in the learning plan.</li> </ul> |



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| <p>Task 2: Creating Self-Monitoring Tools</p>                  | <p>Earners <u>does not submit</u> tools for self-monitoring as required for evidence as outlined in Task 2.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earners <u>does not submit</u> a written response as required for evidence as outlined in Task 2.</p>                                        | <p>Earners submit a tool for self-monitoring for <u>one or two of the three options</u> for expressing and/or demonstrating understanding of content or a single point rubric.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earners submit a written response that <u>partially</u> explains how each tool will support students with improving self-monitoring and executive functioning skills.</p>                                   | <p>Earners submit a tool for students to use to self-monitor progress toward the learning goal for <u>each of the three options</u> presented in Task 1 and one, single-point rubric that applies to the content requirements for all three options.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Earners submit a written response (250-word minimum) that <u>thoroughly</u> explains how each tool and the single-point rubric will support students with improving self-monitoring and executive functioning skills.</p>                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>Task 3: Impacting Students and the Learning Environment</p> | <p>Earners <u>does not submit</u> student work products as required for evidence as outlined in Task 3.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earners <u>does not submit</u> an audio recording of a reflective conversation with students as required for evidence as outlined in Task 3.</p> | <p>Earners submit one student work product for <u>one or two of the options</u> provided to students for expressing and/or demonstrating understanding of content.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Earners submit an audio recording for <u>one or two of the options</u> or the responses do not include a rationale for the option selected or does not explain how having options impacted the learning experience.</p> | <p>Earners submit one student work product for <u>each of the three options</u> provided to students for expressing and/or demonstrating understanding of content and a completed single point rubric with feedback for each student.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Earners submit an audio recording of a reflective conversation with three students (one for each option) who <u>thoroughly</u> explain their rationale for choosing the lesson design and how having options and self-monitoring tools helped them reach their learning goals. The recording reflects authentic student responses not scripted or provided by the teacher.</p> |

### ■ Part Three. 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 Action and Expression. 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.