Universal Design for Learning & Differentiated Instruction Hand in

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UDL and DI fall under the Domain of Multi-Tiered System of Support and the Feature of Inclusive Academic Instruction
Most teachers are asked to sew together different systems. UDL and differentiated instruction is an example of two. To reach the point where I can share how they overlap, I’ll first provide an overview of UDL including its foundations, the guidelines, variability, designing for the environment, and lesson development. I’ll then talk through the elements within differentiation’s instructional model. I’ll tie some of those elements back to UDL to begin sharing the similarities. I’ll finish by sharing how I see the two intersecting and supporting one another.
Not tracking answers – don’t know who answers what. I will address these questions as we move through this webinar.

The UDL framework is mostly for students with disabilities
Differentiation focuses only on instruction
If a teacher uses the UDL framework, then she is already differentiating
If a teacher differentiates, he is already doing UDL
Before we can see how these two can work together, let me give you a little vocabulary.

Differentiation is an instructional model

UDL is a framework
In a nut shell
How they differ
The instructional model of differentiation

- you make your instructional and environmental decisions based on what you learn about your students. The model shows the elements of differentiation and how they are interrelated.
In a nut shell
How they differ

The instructional model of differentiation -
you make your instructional and environment decisions based on what you learn about your students. The model shows the elements of differentiation and how they are interrelated.

The framework of universal design for learning – you design your instruction and environment using the framework to meet the anticipated and systematic variable needs that you already know will be and are present. The guidelines are a collection of researched and evidence-based practices.

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Whether it is a framework, an instructional model, a model for systems change, or any other theoretical or application structure in education, if it’s worth its salt, it’s going to evolve and change. Research and societal shifts call for it. For that reason, I’ve used up-to-date but easy-to-access publications to ground this webinar.
What is the UDL framework?

• The foundations of universal design for learning
• The guidelines
• Variability
• Designing the environment
• The lesson cycle
Describe the picture on the screen.

The term “Universal Design” in UDL came from the work of Ron Mace, then at the University of North Carolina, to provide physical access to structures. UDL is about providing access to learning.
The idea, though, is to provide the access upfront, before any student walks into the learning environment, you have put resources in place so students will have access to learning. No more retrofitting.
The ramps are embedded into the stairways. Not only is accessibility a natural part of the design, it’s not like the accessibility disappears. The mall doesn’t say, “we’re only going to provide access during the hours of 9 am and 10 am. If you come after 10 am, we will have removed the ramps.” Sounds silly in the example, but advocates for UDL think it’s just as silly to leave accessibility out of the design or to only offer access in certain situations or settings instead of across all situations or settings.

I already stated that a foundation of UDL is access, another is that it is for all students (going back to the quiz). All students need access so they can grasp the presented information and skills and grow with them. Whether students are challenged or excelling in the moment, they all need opportunities for access to what they are learning. UDL “goes beyond access, though, and adds in support and challenge” (from CAST into to UDL video). Let’s look at this from the angle of a psychology and the work of Lev Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development.
Vygotsky’s Zone of proximal development: learning takes place when the task is too difficult to learn on one’s own but encouragement and support are provided from a knowledgeable person.

We design access into our environments and lessons so students are within that zone. They need support to learn, but with that support, they can learn. CAST built on this as well as other theories and brought in the affective, recognition, and strategic brain networks.
What is the UDL framework?

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The affective, recognition, and strategic networks are represented by the three brains going across the top. Affective focuses in on our emotional connection to learning, recognition networks are how we interpret the information, and strategic is how we take in the information and plan our environment.
Engagement – the WHY of learning (why do I want to learn this? Why is it meaningful to me?)

Representation – the WHAT of learning (What is this that I’m learning? What is the topic or skill? What do I need to know to grow in my learning? What access options do I need to achieve learning?)

Action & Expression – the HOW of learning (This is how I’m going to show what I know. This is how I’m going to demonstrate my ability to create, evaluate, or analyze? – can you say “Blooms Taxonomy??”)
The guidelines are the headings at the top of all nine blocks
The checkpoints are listed under each of the Guidelines.
What’s the point of the principles, guidelines, and checkpoints? They guide us to structure our environments and lessons so our students become expert learners. Expert learners are...
Looking at this sheet on it’s own can be a bit overwhelming – what does all of this mean???
The UDL wheel provides deeper information about each of the guidelines by breaking down the checkpoints. In addition, you will find links, with the bottom link always taking you back to the UDL Center (one of the links I provided earlier).
What is the UDL framework?

✓ The foundations of universal design for learning
✓ The guidelines
  • Variability
  • Designing the environment
  • The lesson cycle
I want you to think about next year because unless you have a two-grade classroom, you likely don’t know much about the students you will have. There will be move in’s and move out’s, too. It is from this premise that I like to talk about UDL.
We now know that there will be variability across the population. The norm is not the average. In fact, CAST talks about the concept of systematic variability. Differences are so COMMON that they are part of the consistent system.
Within variability is what we know about context. How you are responding, at any given moment, to your environment has direct impact on your learning. If you are at ease, you’ll learn. If you are anxious fearfull for any reason (the subject, another student in the room, the teacher), then you won’t learn as effectively. Think about a learning environment you participated in as an adult.

Story: Educational statistics with Nona Tollefson. No wonder, she wrote about classroom applications of cognitive theories of motivation.
But how do you figure out how to provide these different opportunities? Where do you start?
Use the guidelines to design your lessons and environment. Create the context in which students can be successful!

- students can become connected with the environment and topic,
- students can gain an understanding of the topic or skill,
- students can demonstrate their understanding and application of that topic or skill.

- That’s how you design an environment for that systematic variability.
What is the UDL framework?

- The foundations of universal design for learning
- The guidelines
- Variability
  - Designing the environment
  - The lesson cycle
The UDL framework is at its most effective and powerful when used to design the learning environment rather than focusing only on lessons. When you create an environment that encourages and supports the UDL guidelines, you aren’t spending time creating lesson-specific supports. Let’s return to the wheel for some examples.
Options for recruiting interest – focus on third bullet point. The classroom bookshelf example.
What is the UDL framework?

✓ The foundations of universal design for learning
✓ The guidelines
✓ Variability
✓ Designing the environment
• The lesson cycle
Identify your goal. Look through the guidelines and checkpoints and ask “How might I use these guideline/checkpoint to meet the needs of my learners?”
Investigate or create new methods or strategies that relate to the selected checkpoint(s) “What brings this checkpoint to life?”
Use the methods or strategies to teach “What does this checkpoint look like in my teaching environment?”
Assess student outcomes “In what ways did my students demonstrate knowledge or skills?”
Reflect on your use of the framework “How did the checkpoint/guideline enhance my students’ outcomes?”
Third graders need to be able to estimate and measure length, weight, and temperature, so let's focus on length.
You have students who are learning about measurement through the use of rulers and others who are exploring the concept of length through the use of string.

**Students will measure the length between different points using rulers and yardsticks.**

Would the assessment linked to this goal also assess your students exploring the concept of length? Does this goal limit the methods you will use? (possibly, because....) Does this goal limit the materials you will use? (yes)

**Students will measure the length between different points using provided tools.**

Students who are gaining an understanding of length might use different lengths of yarn.
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UDL is its own framework with its own constructs. I’m consistently asked, “when will I know I’m using UDL?” I always answer, “when you’ve consciously and purposefully used the framework to design your environment and lessons.” There is no checklist. There is not metric. UDL is a collection of evidence-based practices. All are known to establish positive outcomes for students. But UDL makes us (a) consider options and practices we wouldn’t otherwise remember to use, and (b) think about why we’re choosing a practice.
As I talk through the instructional model of differentiation, I will touch back on the principles of UDL to begin that process of weaving them together.
Instructional model
True or False

Readiness is about a student being ready to learn in relation to their knowledge, understanding, or skills.

Readiness is about a student’s ability.
E, C, and I: Gets to the affective (emotional) needs of the students (valuing them for who they are; capacity; collaborative; success and failure will occur for all; observable growth based on hard work; routines and processes)

Student differences: personal triumph when valued, nurtured, and pushed (and supported) to grow. DI recognizes that students vary as thinkers.

Organized curriculum: so students understand what they will be learning. They should leave knowing that they’ve learned that topic or skill.

Assess and Instruction linked: assessment should always inform instruction; Ss should take ownership of their learning; and
The underpinnings

- The connection between environment, curriculum, and instruction
- Attends to student differences
- Curriculum organized to support learning
- Assessment and Instruction are inextricably linked

http://www.diffcentral.com/model.html
The instructional model for differentiation is meant to provide an overall look at differentiation. Similar to UDL, the authors tell teachers that you won’t be doing all of these things all at once in every instance. Rather, these are best practices pulled together to establish a cohesive picture of what differentiation involves.
Respectful tasks – when the environment encourages and supports learning
Quality curriculum – “high interest, high relevance” “taps into learners interest, feelings and interest”
Teaching up – providing instruction that requires students to reach just a bit
(Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development: learning takes place when the task is too difficult to learn on one’s own but encouragement and support are provided from a knowledgeable person)
Flexible grouping – from working alone to working with the total group and every combination in between.
Continual assessment - using assessment to inform instruction
Building community – Guiding and leading students and setting/managing routines

http://diffcentral.com/model/html Intro video
Initial quiz question: Differentiation focuses only on instruction. This portion of the instructional model emphasizes the breadth of differentiation and that it is meant to be utilized across the entire learning environment.
Readiness — “students’ entry point relative to particular knowledge, understanding, or skills” (p. 19) *readiness does NOT equal ability* (poll/quiz) Instead of “she’s not ready for that,” shift the thinking to, “what opportunities should be made available to provide her with the skills/knowledge necessary to be ready?” (goes back to polling question at the beginning)

Interest — “affinity, curiosity, or passion for a particular topic of skill” (p. 19)

Learning profile— “the ways in which a learner learns” (p. 18) You know that all of these profiles are going to exist in your classroom – that’s what variability tell us. Make sure you provide ways for all of those profiles to experience learning in your classroom.

It is within this level of the instructional model that demonstrates how DI and UDL are the most different. While what you learn about your students can be used to group them and make other instructional choices, this part of the model is individualized. UDL asks us to plan for the inevitable variability upfront by building in options for engagement, representation, and action & expression.
Why differentiate?
What do you differentiate? And
How do you differentiate?
The initial poll “If you’re using UDL, you’re already differentiating”
Both UDL and differentiation say the following:

ALL students are different, all learn in different ways. This isn’t a belief, this is based on studies from the fields of brain science and neuro-science. Both want teachers to set and maintain high expectations, but to establish learning opportunities that place students within “the zone.”
I suggest this mental image: overlay UDL on the environment. Use UDL to initially design that environment because you know that systemic variability will be present. You embed options within the environment and lessons so all students can gain the skills needed to become motivated, purposeful, knowledgeable, resourceful, strategic, and goal-directed learners.

Use the instructional model of differentiation to focus on individual student needs. You can also use the DI instructional model to remind you of the components of the environment (Content, Process, Product, Affect, Learning environment).

For example, within DI, there is an emphasis on student interest, but where do you go with that? If we go back to the wheel and look at recruiting student interest (as well as the other two guidelines under engagement), you will walk away with a more firm
direction of how you’re going to recruit your students’ interest.

Some of you are really familiar with DI, I urge you to learn more about UDL and see how you can bring that into your planning. Some of you know a lot of about UDL, I urge you to look at the differentiation instructional model to see if it spurs your thinking along when it comes to the options your providing and how you’re constructing your environment.

UDL and DI are definitely different. One is a framework with specific evidence-based practices and directly links back to three brain networks. The other is an instructional model that guides teachers to broaden their thinking about how differently each student learns. In both cases, there is a gap between the traditional classroom and the implementation of either UDL or DI. Both set the stage for equity, both are reliant on formative assessment, both want our students to understand the goal of the lesson and actively (versus passively) participate in reaching that goal. I encourage educators to continue this conversation and look for examples within their own environments. When does something feel more like differentiation and why? When does it seem to be more like UDL and why? But the biggest question must be how is this benefitting our students and what data demonstrate those benefits.
I want to leave you with two additional resources. The first is a popular video of Todd Rose (no relation to David Rose at CAST) where we explain variability. The second is an article about the intersections between UDL and DI.
THANK YOU!

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