# Introduction Transcript

In this module, we will begin to introduce the Universal Design for Learning framework and start to explain what it means.

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. In this workshop we will share some best practices in UDL implementation to enable strategies for strengthening student accessibility, engagement and learning outcomes through the development of flexible learning environments.

Higher education student populations are becoming increasingly diverse in the form of minority ethnic groups, gender identities, disability, cultures, and varying socio-economic backgrounds.

UDL provides a research-based framework that can be used to anticipate human variability and to reduce learning barriers in the design of any environment and serves well to support the diversity appearing in the higher education environments.

## [Second Slide]

UDL emerged as a framework to look at facilitating learning considering that all learners have different needs. It is based on the predictable idea of learner variability that has led to UDL.

In its simplest explanation UDL is about providing multiple ways to learning to allow learners to select which path they wish.

New insights into how the brain works learning has identified differences in learners

Intersection of a variety of initiatives – such as integrated units, multi-sensory teachings, multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, use of computers, performance based assessments - ties together all these areas and research to address the increasing diversity in education.

The understanding of how learners differ help to consider how a diversity of opportunities assist in reaching many learners.   
Seldom does “one size fit all” work.

Now this sounds daunting but starting with small steps it doesn’t need to be overwhelming.

This has been developed as a framework recognizing learner variability and looks to proactively building courses planning for that variability

UDL has over 30 years of research in neuroscience and education supporting it

It has begun to emerging as a recognized approach listed in legislation and recommendations

Ultimately the goal of the UDL framework is to empower learners to become self-actualized learners

Its key points recognize no one learns in the same manner and that learning needs can be different in contexts for the same learner

UDL is not a checklist

And it is not technology based although technology can help provide multiple ways and is a powerful tool to capitalize on for helping provide flexibility

## [Third Slide]

Back to the question what is UDL?

UDL framework is based on three principles

* Engagement – which is the **why of learning**
  + This is the emotional and is now realized to be a strong influencer on the success – your learners need to want to learn
* Representation – which is the **what of learning**
  + this is recognition and making sense of the patterns around us for learning
* Action and Expression –
  + is the **how of learning** or the actions to build our understanding and enable us to become strategic in learning actions

## [Fourth Slide]

With UDL,

Begin with clear goals

* Ensure your goals are presented so that learners can perceive and understand
* Try to keep your goals separate from the means, where possible
* Present your goals to highlight their relevance
* Ensure those goals don’t have hidden curriculums embedded in their assessment such as marking for writing style when this was not listed as one of goals.

Where possible provide flexible assessment options

* for example if writing isn’t the goal of the work, then allow other ways to assess such as a podcast or recorded presentation and enable your students to choice for their optimal way to demonstrate they understood

Materials and Methods

* Ensure flexible materials are available for learners
  + Materials include media and tools sharing information with learners.
  + Could include digital technologies such as a glossary that is hyperlinked through your materials or an online video
  + These can also be options such as a whiteboard
  + UDL materials are varied, flexible and enable different pathways progressing towards the goal
  + These materials are aligned to the intended learning goal
* Ensure flexible methods are available for learners

Universal Design for Learning is about taking the proactive approach providing a framework built upon the [recognition](https://scope.bccampus.ca/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=3753&displayformat=dictionary), [strategic](https://scope.bccampus.ca/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=3754&displayformat=dictionary) and [affective](https://scope.bccampus.ca/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=3752&displayformat=dictionary) networks. Using the UDL Guidelines as a tool to help look for ideas and specific considerations are a tool to aid in applying UDL to practice.

In the coming modules we will explore each of the three principles.