



# UDL in Higher Education

45 professional development hours

## Course Description

Higher education faculty encounter a diverse student population with various learning needs, whether teaching in a traditional classroom setting, hybrid, or online. Too many students are failing to succeed and student retention continues to be an enormous issue. As institutions struggle to recruit, engage, and retain their students, it is time to evaluate whether current instructional practices are still working for students.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that encourages instructors to design and deliver courses using flexible instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments with embedded choices and scaffolds to meet the needs of your diverse learning population. UDL takes into consideration that students learn differently and, therefore, should be provided with different options for learning materials and for demonstrating learning.

This course will help you understand the basic principles of UDL, and how to use the guidelines and philosophies to create a safe learning environment where students are invested, engaged, and thriving. We will also cover how the use of technology can assist teachers and trainers with creating flexible curricula that facilitate instructional differentiation to support all students in a higher education setting, regardless of varying needs.

## Course Objectives

- Equip higher education faculty with an understanding of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to accommodate diverse learning needs in both traditional and online classroom settings.
- Empower instructors to apply UDL guidelines and philosophies to design flexible instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that foster student engagement and success in higher education.
- Enable educators to leverage technology effectively to implement UDL strategies and create inclusive learning environments that support all students, ultimately improving student retention and academic outcomes in higher education.

## Course Instructor

**Tom Thibodeau** is the co-author of *UDL in the Cloud* and is the Director of Online Learning for Novak Education. Tom was an assistant provost at the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) for 19 years. As assistant provost, Tom served as the division chair for nine academic departments with 23 degree programs (AS, BS, MS & Doctorate). He also led faculty development, outcomes assessment and attendance tracking through a team-based approach. As the facilitator of new faculty orientation, Tom stressed the use of UDL, active learning, problem-based learning, and technology-enhanced teaching and learning. He managed the development of NEIT's first online degree program in Information Technology and implemented a new curriculum mapping process throughout the university.

Tom started at NEIT in 1990 as an adjunct instructor in video production and then an assistant professor, department chair and director of the Center for Distributed Learning and the Faculty Resource Center. He has been working in online learning since 1996.

# Recommended Course Texts/Resources

All resources will be provided in the course every week.

The following two books are optional. The Meyers book is a free online interactive book from CAST, the creators of UDL, but K-12 specific. The Bracken book is higher ed specific.

- Meyers, A., Rose, D., Gordon, D. (2014) [Universal Design for Learning, Theory and Practice](#) Wakefield, MA. CAST Inc. ISBN-10: 0989867404 (Free eText book)
- Bracken, S & Novak, K (2019) [Transforming Higher Education Through Universal Design for Learning: An International Perspective](#). New York, NY, Routledge. ISBN-10: 0815354738

## Learning Activities

This course requires participants to be engaged and prepared for each and every assignment. The course will be offered fully online yet students will have the opportunity to communicate with fellow participants through Canvas discussion boards and during live sessions. There will be a Zoom Conference call every week.

- Content Review - Each week, you will have multiple options for enhancing your knowledge of the course topics. Remember, UDL is about empowering students to make choices that best suit their needs. You do not need to read or interact with all of the materials - just those that are best suited for you.
- Assignments - Assignments will help participants build further understanding of the course content. Students will be asked to submit assignments in varying modes of expression.

## Assignment Submission

Assignments should be submitted by the designated due dates/times as outlined within Canvas. Extensions will be granted if you contact the instructor before the due date. Students will be provided with the option to resubmit assignments to improve their practice, and enhance their learning. All work should be your own - when you reference other's work or research, make sure to use proper citations. You may use whatever citation method you are most comfortable using.

## Global Assignment Rules

Every week students will be asked to submit an assignment in a different mode of expression. This is not a recommended UDL practice to assign a certain method of response but the nature of this course is to give you an opportunity to try different methods so that you will be able to offer them to your students and be prepared to help them in the process. Students will get to choose the mode of expression each week but need to use at least five of the six modes listed below. **You may do as many group projects as you like as long as each project is in a different form of expression!** Please note: There are no word count requirements or any specific formatting rules that you have to follow. We will not be assessing the quality of the writing or the specifics of the format you choose. There is no need to create anything too long or involved so two or three paragraphs in a text, 4 or 5 slides in a presentation or 5 to 7 minutes in an audio or video will be just fine.

### Forms of expression


1. Verbal/Text based (your standard text message, discussion post, poster, infographic, poem, word document, slides) Check out [Canva](#) for help with creating images, presentations and posters. You can scan or take a picture of anything you do on paper.
2. Audio based (a basic podcast, song or audio file created with your phone or recording device) Check out a free online audio recorder like [Vocaroo](#).

3. Visual/Video based (a basic video file shot with your smartphone or other device, animation with [Animoto](#)...we are not expecting "Gone with the Wind")
4. Computer based (a different computer version of any of the above: [A blog](#). [A Vocaroo](#).)
5. Group based (any of the above done with others in a group) You can use [Zoom](#) to record your group activity.
6. Kinetically/Psychomotor based (a video of any role playing, demonstrations, interpretive dance).


After you have posted, please review and comment on at least two of your classmates' posts.




## Evaluation & Grading Policy




Assignments will be an opportunity to bring together everything you have learned within a module. We will encourage you to **create** an amazing product or post to share with your **network**! Take a **risk** and share your learning in a new way - lots of options and choices available! We will provide feedback based on this rubric!


 <b>Killing it!</b> Evidence of going above and beyond answering the essential question	 <b>You Got This!</b> The target/goal criteria	 <b>Not Yet</b> Evidence of working toward answering the essential question
	Product is an original <b>creation</b> that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● models an understanding of UDL</li> <li>● is clearly organized</li> <li>● answers the essential question of the module</li> <li>● is appropriate for the task, purpose, and audience.</li> </ul>	
<b>1 point</b> Meeting the standard, or going above and beyond, will earn you the full point value for the assignment.		

## Course Schedule

MODULE	Topics
	<p><b>Module 1: The Why: Learner Variability &amp; Learning Preferences</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand how and why we learn and how individuals adopt different learning strategies in different settings</li> <li>● Recognize the extreme diversity and variability among students in higher education settings</li> <li>● Compare and contrast the characteristics of student learning strategies</li> <li>● Get to know your classmates</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Why is it important to understand different learning strategies and recognize variability in our students?</i></li> </ul>

	<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 2: The Role of the Learner’s Experience - Barriers to Learning</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the role of the instructor in the design and delivery of a UDL lesson</li> <li>• Understand the role of teacher efficacy in outcomes of students</li> <li>• Determine variables that impact student learning and course community formation</li> <li>• Explain how various digital technologies facilitate student learning in face-to-face and online classroom/training room</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can we remove barriers to learning when we design lessons in face-to-face and online learning environments?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 3: The Guiding Principles of UDL &amp; Learner Agency</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the principles, guidelines, and checkpoints of the UDL framework</li> <li>• Reflect on the what Growth Mindset is and how it can help students and teachers</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What is Universal Design for Learning and how can it help us design lessons that remove barriers and embrace variability?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 4: The Why: Engagement</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will take a deep dive into the UDL guidelines on engagement.</li> <li>• Educators will learn strategies to support students in sustaining effort and persistence and promoting self-regulation in both online learning and face-to-face environments.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the difference between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated learning.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What resources or strategies can you identify to help students sustain their effort over time and self-regulate when they are challenged?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 5: The What: Representation</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will take a deep dive into the UDL guidelines on representation.</li> <li>• Instructors will learn how to build comprehension using accessible technologies in online and face-to-face classroom settings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What accessible technologies can help students of all variability build comprehension, particularly in complex subject matters in higher ed settings?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 6: The How: Action and Expression</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a deep dive into the UDL guidelines on Action &amp; Expression.</li> <li>• Learn how to support executive functions and and sustaining effort and persistence to increase student success.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can we support students with expression, communication, and executive functions to deepen learning and increase their success in higher education settings?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 7: Feedback and Self-Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the three types of feedback and scheduling feedback loops.</li> <li>• Explore the UDL Progression Rubric as a self-assessment tool.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How does modeling and ongoing, relevant feedback support strategic learning in teacher observations?</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can we build a culture of shared feedback within our school communities?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 8: Designing &amp; Delivering Universally Designed Lessons in Higher Ed</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create strategies for including an institution's standards into student outcomes.</li> <li>• Develop a plan to combat shallow student learning in a way that integrates UDL Guidelines</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How do you proactively design lessons aligned to the principles of UDL?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the introductory video</li> <li>• Attend any live sessions</li> <li>• Review the module resources in each lesson</li> <li>• Complete the module assignment (a final project).</li> </ul>