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Designing inclusive classrooms: How to create meaningful learning experiences

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Land Acknowledgement



We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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Access Check

We encourage you to check, identify, and question your learning environment for any of the following and welcome comments if there are elements that we can support to reduce barriers.

- Technology
- Space
- Resources
- Pace

“We all have bodies, hearts, and minds. We all have needs and capacities, strengths and vulnerabilities”

- Skin, Tooth, and Bone: A Disability Justice Primer



Agenda

1. Introduction to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework for accessible and inclusive pedagogy
2. Incorporating UDL 3.0 to enhance access and learner agency in your classroom
3. Collaborative, experiential practice
4. Collective Reflection



Session Objectives

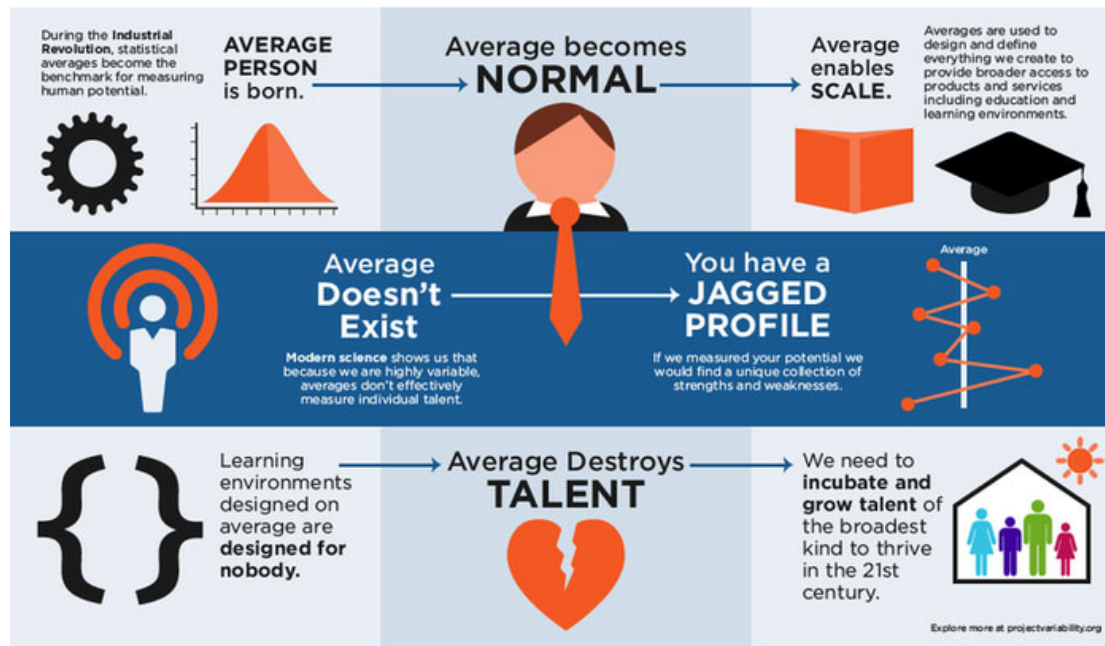
By the end of this session you will:

1. Develop a foundation understanding of the UDL 3.0 framework
2. Learn practical strategies to apply UDL 3.0 for enhanced accessibility and learner agency
3. Know where to turn for additional support



The Myth of Average

THE MYTH OF AVERAGE



UDL Overview

3 Key Design Principles

Engagement

- Ways to spark enthusiasm and motivation for learning

Representation

- Ways to perceive information and represent a diversity of perspectives

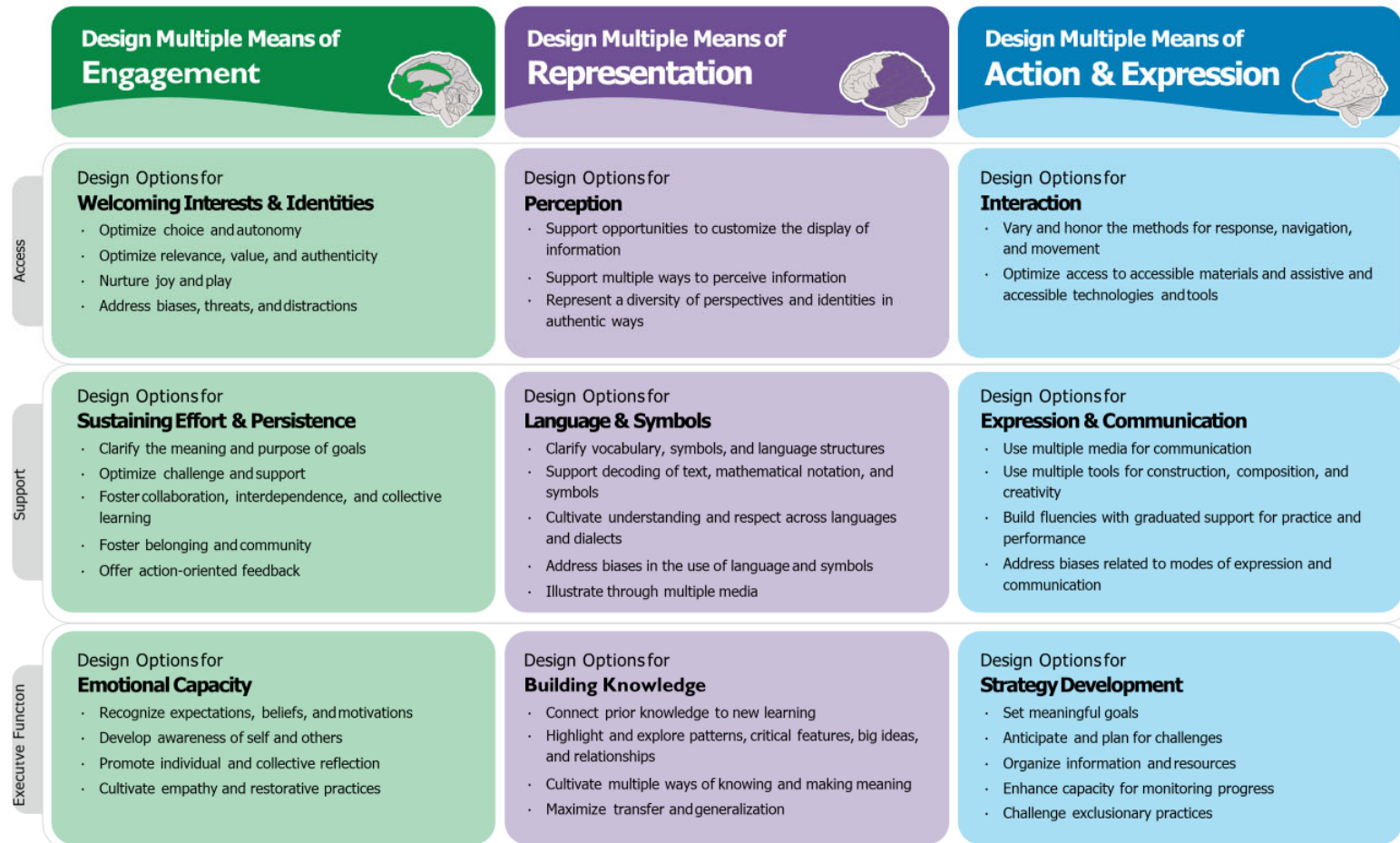
Action and Expression

- Ways to engage with and demonstrate knowledge



The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

The goal of UDL is **learner agency** that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented.



3.0 Expansions

- Intersectional identity as learner variability
- Addressing bias & inequity as a significant learning barrier
- Promoting interdependence & collective learning
- Shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered language
- Nurturing play and joy
- Fostering belonging and community



Expansion Rationale

Design vs Provide:

“It's all about who has the power. So the educator is immediately perceived as ‘you have the power or the autonomy or the ownership,’ and then it comes back to kind of that deeper identity level. And if you're talking about co-design and breaking down those kinds of powers, then that word ‘provide’ has a very significant meaning because, ‘I am giving you this’ ... ‘I am providing you with this’ ... On the other hand, we have certain responsibilities, and I don't wanna get away from that either.”

Learner Agency vs Expert Learner:

“In terms of engagement, we don't highlight the ‘expert’ because I always try to tell all of my [students] that they are the experts already ... you come in as an expert.”

Nurturing joy and play:

“Our society values worth on production, title. Joy and play is huge — should be part of the paradigm shift — it's not just about being productive.”



How to incorporate UDL 3.0

Plus-One Method (Behling and Tobin, 2018)

- Identify a 'pinch-point,' a piece of your course that falls short of meeting your expectations, that provokes questions from students or that you frequently have to reteach and add one option or variation to reduce potential barriers.



Breakout Room Practice

Scenario: You are teaching a course that you have taught before, and in previous semesters, the class was known for its lively discussions and high student engagement. However, this semester, you have noticed that student engagement is significantly lower during the first few weeks of class. Students seem hesitant to participate in discussions, and the overall energy in the classroom is lacking.



Collective Reflection

1. What could be potential pinch-points in the scenario provided?
2. How can the UDL 3.0 guidelines be put to use to increase student engagement?





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Thank You!

Questions & Comments:
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